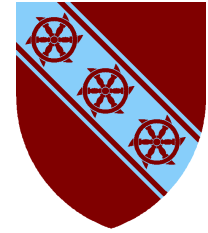




*St Catherine's College Rowing Society*  
*St Catherine's College,*  
*Oxford OX1 3UJ*



*25th Anniversary Year 1984-2004*

31st October, 2004

**In this issue . . .**

It made the Sydney win seem positively comfortable, didn't it? While Matt Pinsent's exploits have long since acquired a following well beyond the readership of these newsletters, other students and alumni have also been making a bit of a splash. There's an item on the Boat Club of 10 years ago, along with news from those who rowed in it, while Don Barton and Tom Shafto contribute from the Boat Club of 50 years ago.

**2004 Olympics**

I should, of course, start with the Athens Olympics, even though the story will be well-known to most of you. The GB men's four beat Canada by mere inches to earn Matthew Pinsent (M.89), his fourth Olympic Gold medal. Credit should also be given to the Canadians, not only for producing such a great race, but also displaying such sportsmanship in the aftermath.

There has been some debate about whether the GB four were lucky to win on the surge of the stroke, but, having rewatched it on video, it seems to me that the crews crossed the line at the parts of the stroke which gave any advantage to the Canadians.



The GB IV at the medal ceremony. Apparently the rendition of the National Anthem by certain members of the crew was so awful as to move even a big man to tears. Photo from the ARA website, [www.ara-rowing.org](http://www.ara-rowing.org).



Vesta RC being presented with medals at Henley Women's Regatta by former sports minister, Kate Hoey (in jacket). Caroline Trotter (M.95) is third from left. Photo from Vesta RC website [www.vrc.org.uk](http://www.vrc.org.uk)

**Results**

**Henley Women's Regatta (18-20th June)**

*Senior Eights - Final* (C.Trotter no.7 in Vesta)  
 Vesta bt Mortlake A&A 1  $\frac{1}{4}$  L

**Henley Royal Regatta (30th June - 4th July)**

*Student Coxed Fours - Final* (J.Woodrow & Imperial College bt Isis  $\frac{1}{2}$  L P.Holland in Isis)

*Diamond Sculls - Final*  
 Marcel Hacker (Ger) bt Colin Smith Easily

*Stewards (Coxless Fours) - Final*  
 Leander & Imperial College (M.Pinsent stroke) bt Melbourne U. & U. Queensland (Aus) 2 L

**World U23 Regatta (Poznan, 6-8th August)**

*Men's Single Sculls - Final*  
 1st Latvia 7:24.00  
 2nd Great Britain 7:24.98 (Colin Smith)  
 3rd Netherlands 7:25.36

**Olympic Regatta (Athens, 15-22nd August)**

*Men's Coxless Fours - Final*  
 1st Great Britain 6:06.98 (Matt Pinsent)  
 2nd Canada 6:07.06  
 3rd Italy 6:10.41

**President: Tony Hancox**

Vice Presidents: Don Barton, Rev. Joseph Bell,  
 Sir Timothy Garden KCB, Richard Peters,  
 Matthew Pinsent CBE, Ben Sylvester.

## Summer Racing

As mentioned in the last newsletter, a St Catherine's crew made an unsuccessful attempt to qualify for the Intermediate Coxed Fours event in Henley Women's Regatta. However, Caroline Trotter (M.95) met with more success in the Vesta crew which won Senior Eights.

In Henley Royal Regatta Catz students and alumni appeared in three of this year's finals. Paul Holland (M.03) and James Woodrow (M.02) rowed for Isis in the new Student Coxed Fours competition, losing narrowly to Imperial. Matt Pinsent stroked the GB four to victory in the Stewards, which also happened to be the first race in their Olympic line-up. Colin Smith (M.03), stroke of OUBC and Catz 1st Eights, had a good run in the Diamond Sculls, including (ahem!) eliminating the designated GB Olympic sculler, until he came up against a former World Champion in the finals.



No, not a coxed pair, but the medallists from the World U23 men's single sculls. At a mere 6'1", Colin isn't even one of the bigger members of his College's 1st Eight. Photo from the OUBC website, [www.oubc.org.uk](http://www.oubc.org.uk)

Colin went on to represent GB in the U23 World Championships in Poznan, Poland, where he won the silver medal (the podium picture, above, being one of the more remarkable of the year's rowing images). Not a bad haul for a fresher. One wonders what he has planned for his second year.

## World Masters (Hamburg, 2–5th Sep)

### Paul Halfpenny (M.97)

I went to the World Masters with the Swiss team this year — with pretty much the same results as last year: 2nd in the single scull, 3rd in the double and 1st (a medal!) in the mixed quad.

### Tony Mitchell (M.78)

I Raced in a Quintin VetC quad which came second in the heat but was ill with a throat infection so had

to withdraw from VetB 1x and VetC 1x. Tried to get a mixed 2x together with Sue Brown, (née Clarke, St Anne's, I think, about my time), Xpress member, but she never called or wrote. So went to plan B: got pissed and went sightseeing in Hamburg and Lübeck. Probably the fittest sightseer in Lübeck but there were no prizes for that.

Anyway, I hope to be back in 2005 and will open my World Champs campaign with Swindon Splash and Dash family coxed quad, including my son, both my daughters and my father in law (72). Always good to aim high.

## A Summer's Outing

### Don Barton (M.48)

In 1950 the Captain of Boats, Geoff Sworder, entered our eight in Reading Regatta early in June. Eights Week was not a great success; the 1st VIII made 2 bumps but were bumped in turn on the last night. It was decided that a composite eight might benefit from an extended paddle down to Reading, with bursts of rowing along the way. As Secretary, I was deputed to make the necessary arrangements. These were not onerous; a letter to each of the downstream lock-keepers giving an estimated time of arrival, and a request that if river traffic permitted their locks be kept full to speed our passage; a letter to Pangbourne College seeking brief use of their landing stage on the second day; and letters to arrange our mid-day refreshment.

On the Thursday prior to the Regatta we paddled down to Wallingford, housed our boat with Wallingford RC, and took the service bus back to Oxford. The next morning we resumed our paddle downstream.

Pangbourne provided us with our perhaps most memorable incident. A riverside guest-house had laid on a modest sit-down lunch, served by an unsophisticated but spirited waitress. We engaged her — as one does — in some chat and light-hearted banter. At one stage she volunteered that it was her half-day off, and that after lunch she was off to Reading. One of our number jocularly offered to give her a lift in our boat — to us a self-evidently unrealistic proposition. But not to her; she bridled, and observed that 'I wouldn't trust my arse with you lot'. Who says women's lib began in the 1960's?

Chastened, we made our farewells, and paddled on to Reading, initially rather sluggishly. As for the Regatta, we did not distinguish ourselves; we drew against University College Hospital, who knocked us out in our first heat.

## 10 Years Ago ...

*Excerpts from the History of St Catherine's Rowing.*

### Elliott Wiseman, Men's Vice-Captain

After the antics of Torpids, the Men's Boat Club have a new saying: 'It's not *how* you do it, but *doing* it that counts!'. We moved up one place without actually bumping anyone, quite an achievement considering the sporadic nature of outings during a term once again dictated by the weather. Lack of time on the water was certainly supplemented by hours in the gym and that, no doubt, had a strong influence on the end result. After being technically bumped down on the 1st day<sup>1</sup>, Balliol were after our scalps but we held them off admirably proving that we were worth our new position in Division I.

### Newsletter, 16th June, 1995

... Which brings us to the Men's 3rd VIII. How can mere words ever do full justice to this crew? They came dressed as 'Supermen', complete with theme music, spare pairs of socks (funny how all the women I spoke to had noticed where they had stuffed them) and, on the last day, the full Clark Kent-to-Superman strip-off in front of OUBC. Which led to the previously unconsidered question: 'Just where does Superman keep his boots while he's being Clark Kent?' (Odd that you never think of these things until you see someone try it).



The 1995 Women's 1st Torpid at the OUBC pontoon. From left: Richard Copley (coach), Emily Dana (7), Nikki Collis (6), Becky Killick (4), Flo Coutts (cox), Kath Simkins (str), Natalie Waterfield (3), Bluebell Martin (2), Cheryl Hardy (5), Em Thomas (bow). Photo from Cheryl Hardy.

<sup>1</sup>For failing to wear a lifejacket, a rule introduced that year

### Cheryl Hardy, Women's Captain

The 1st Eight, feeling mean and dangerous with new ultralight hatchet blades (the men were very jealous) moved up two places to end up 6th on the river. We bumped Univ just before the Gut on Wednesday, and Brasenose at Timms on Friday. On Saturday our motto 'an inch a stroke' came into play as we closed on Somerville, but, although they managed to hold us off, their expressions of huge relief at the finish line showed us that we had them worried.

### On news of the new boathouse project ...

... which has elicited responses from old members varying from 'Jolly good' to 'AWESOME!!' — by the way, one of these is an American — but I thank Nick Curson (M.84) for summarising what many of us must be feeling at this moment:

'Good news. I trust that uppermost on the agenda is a well stocked bar with vastly subsidised Pimms in plentiful supply. Oh, and a couple of racks for boats too ...'.

### News from Alumni

**Tom Shafto (M.47)** In 1949 I was a raw school-boy surrounded by ex-service men (no women at St Catherine's then) but also proud to cox the successful band of rowers in the 1st Eight. I still have my rudder recording our bumps and in those days we really did *bump*. Unfortunately severe tonsillitis kept me from Marlow.

The next year the Army, having waited patiently during my 3 year deferment was so eager for my services that about a week after Schools I received my little brown envelope with rail warrant and summons to Whittington Barracks. Authority graciously allowed me 2 days freedom to attend my viva but after basic training and OCTU it realised how sad I had been at missing the main event and generously found me a little war to attend in Korea.

Then followed marriage and ten entirely forgettable years with one of the big insurance companies. Academia started to beckon and the rest of my career was spent lecturing, writing text books and coping with two daughters followed by two granddaughters and a grandson. One daughter went to St Hugh's but rode horses instead of rowing and is now teaching. In academic life I developed an interest in writing and tutoring for distance learning and this still keeps me busy and more or less solvent.

Unfortunately my late wife's declining health kept me from the 1949 fifty year reunion but I am still



in contact with Don Barton and Ben Sylvester and often think back to those days on the river, the beery evenings on the barge and especially the Saturday afternoon trips to Abingdon. After all, I just had to sit back and admire the view.

**Richard Copley (M.89)** After finishing my D.Phil I worked at SmithKline Beecham for 18 months, then at the EMBL in Heidelberg for 3 1/2 years. I'm now at the Wellcome Trust Centre for Human Genetics in Oxford.

**Dominick Layfield (M.90)** Since leaving Catz, I went to MIT to do my PhD in medical engineering. I graduated last year, moved to San Francisco, and have been working as consultant since then. I also got married in June. I just (two days ago!) moved to Park City, in the mountains of Utah, where my wife is starting a new job. I'm hoping that I can find work out here; if not, I'll certainly get plenty of skiing in!

I rowed for about four years at MIT before finally growing tired of the early mornings. Unable to give up over-exercise, I replaced the rowing with running, climbing, and triathlons. By the way, it has taken me quite a while to finally beat your marathon P.B.<sup>2</sup>, running three hours dead in the NYC marathon last fall. Next year's ambitious goal is to run 2:50. I'm hoping that the altitude training (it's about 2200 m here) will help!

**Julian Batt (M.92)** Since leaving Catz, I joined SBC Warburg, followed the organisation through a series of mergers and currently work at UBS Investment Bank as chief of staff for Equity Technology. Married to Anna in 1997, and have two children Esther and Philip. Not been a in a rowing boat since leaving Oxford.

**Dan Bebber (M.93)** After my DPhil I went to Canada for a couple of years to study forests. Now I'm back in Oxford doing a 3-year post-doc on woodland fungi at the Department of Plant Sciences, and am Lecturer in Biology at St Peter's until they get someone intelligent and hardworking to take over. I live north of Oxford in a rural idyll, with my wife Clare and daughter Alice. I'm not rowing at the moment due to lack of spare time, but hope one day to be back on the water.

**Heather Balmer (now Townsend) (M.94)** Happily retired from coxing about 4 years ago, so the rivers are now safe again from my sometimes erratic racing lines. However, before I retired, I did get to take a crew out to the World Masters in Seville.

<sup>2</sup>Unfortunately for Dom, I've improved by a couple more minutes since he left Catz

Since I left university, I initially had fun working in Supply Chain Management for Proctor & Gamble but spent a lot of time coxing a variety of crews with Staines Boat Club.

Meeting my future husband, Mike co-incident with my retiring from the sport. It's a sad thing to say but the combination of early mornings at the weekends and my body starting to resent the pressures that coxing places on the joints, forced me to retire. After 2 years at P&G I went to work for Tesco, and moved into training and development. I've just left them and are looking forward to carrying on my career as a 'People development specialist'.

Mike and I are based up in Bedfordshire, and so far I've managed to resist the delights of coxing for Bedford or Star on the Ouse. At the moment no family have yet come along — but we do have a very special cat!

**Johnny Halsall (M.94)** Memories of a broken rudder, hitting the bank with half the boat still rowing full pelt and then Matt Holcroft having to jump out as the opposing crew carried on rowing straight into the side of us. A nice quiet introduction to rowing in Christ Church Regatta . . . Then cycling through town in superman outfits, broken seats and crabs galore in the 3rd Eight in the summer.

Since I left Oxford, I haven't managed to set foot in a boat despite now living only a stone's throw from the river in Hammersmith. I have been in London now for the past 7 years but currently work for Unilever which involves regular trips out to Rotterdam. Despite being a glamorous international location, it also has a lot of boats on the river but they come in slightly larger sizes out there.

## Coming Up . . .

In the next issue, assuming the river goes down, there will be reports on this term's rowing from the new Captains, news of our triallists and a look back at the Boat Club of 20 years ago (84/85) when Richard Peters and Marie-Clare Sowerby were Captains. If you rowed that year, please send an item for the Alumni news section. Contributions from other alumni also welcomed.

Anu Dudhia

email: [dudhia@atm.ox.ac.uk](mailto:dudhia@atm.ox.ac.uk)

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

## Diary

2–5 Mar 2005	Torpids
5 Mar 2005	Rowing Society Dinner & AGM
26 Mar 2005	Henley Boat Races
27 Mar 2005	The Boat Race
25–28 May 2005	Eights