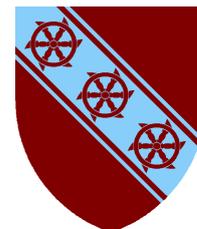


St Catherine's College Rowing Society
St Catherine's College,
Oxford OX1 3UJ



18th December, 2005

In this issue . . .

There are the Captains' reports on this term's rowing, news of the OUBC Trial Eights in which Catz men featured rather significantly, an article by Graham Kaye on the Isis of 50 years ago, a look at the Boat Club of 15 years ago and, most importantly, how we propose to go about finding a name for that last boat.



Catz Novice Women experiencing a 'Christ Church' moment. Still managed to win, though.

Boat Naming

Kevin Skinner, Rowing Society Chairman

The Rowing Society has been asked to name one of the new eights and it has been suggested that the right to choose the name should be given to the highest bidder. The proceeds of the auction will go to the Anniversary Fund which the Society set up to provide two rooms for the Boat Club Captains (already achieved) and a Foundation Scholarship which is halfway towards its target of £25 000.

The rules of the auction will be as follows:

1. The final decision shall rest with the Rowing Society Committee.
2. The right to put forward a name for the eight will go to the one whose bid is deemed to be highest.
3. Bids shall be made in writing or by email to the President: Bruce Mitchell, The Hoo Farm, Tewkesbury, Glos. GL20 7DD, or by email to hoofarm@ukonline.co.uk

4. The amount of the highest valid bid received to date (until the day before the closing date) will be displayed on the Rowing Society Web site, or can be obtained by phoning Bruce Mitchell (+44 (0)1684 292185)
5. The closing date for all bids shall be noon on Sunday, 8th January 2006.
6. All proceeds from the 'auction' shall go to the Anniversary Fund to establish a Rowing Society Foundation Scholarship.

Further information may be obtained from Bruce Mitchell.

Results

British Indoor Rowing Champ. 20th Nov

Men's BUSA Hwt (236 entries)

25th	6:06.9	Bastien Ripoll
44th	6:12.7	Bruce Magee
66th	6:19.2	Colin Smith
81st	6:22.3	Stephan Moelvig
91st	6:25.6	James Hutton
142nd	6:41.7	Steve Wicks
177th	6:56.9	Peter Goult

Men's 45-49 Hwt (53 entries)

26th	6:51.9	Kevin Skinner (M.78)
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Christ Church Regatta 23rd-26th Nov

<i>Round 1</i>	Women's A	bt	St Anne's D
	Men's A	bt	Jesus C
	Men's B	bt	Wadham B
	Men's C	bt	Corpus B
<i>Round 2</i>	Women's A	bt	Balliol C
	St Antony's A	bt	Men's C
<i>Round 3</i>	Hertford A	bt	Women's A
	Men's A	bt	Worcester A
	Hertford C	bt	Men's B
<i>Round 4</i>	Exeter A	bt	Men's A

Wallingford Head 4th December

Men's Novice VIIIs (12 entries)

18:44	St Catherine's	2nd
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Women's Senior 4 VIIIs (14 entries)

22:13	Catz/Pemb/Mert	8th
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President: Bruce Mitchell

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

Women's Boat Club Report

Amy Banham-Hall (Women's Captain)

The big focus of this term has, of course, been Christ Church Regatta and our novice programme. The girls' crew stood out for their hard work and enthusiasm, reflected by their Christ Church results where they had a good draw and won their first two races easily. Their third race showed their best performance yet, though they were narrowly beaten by Hertford A. Nearly all of the crew are keen to carry on for Torpids.

Despite having lost a chunk of our senior team to finals this year, our remaining senior girls have shown impressive dedication in both land and water training. The newly established 'Erg Club' has seen regular attendance from many of us, with frequent Personal Best performances in the Monday night torture sessions!

Four of our top rowers and our cox teamed up with girls from Merton and Pembroke to compete in Wallingford Head at the end of term, where we performed extremely well, despite having to stop several times for boats we'd caught up in front.



Boat Club Captains Amy Banham-Hall and Peter Goult.

Men's Boat Club Report

Peter Goult (Men's Captain)

After a large and highly successful recruitment drive from the Committee, we established a novice programme while maintaining senior training throughout the term. We put a fairly even spread of undergraduate rowers in our Novice A and B boats, and thanks to an awesome recruitment effort by our MCR President, Mathias Rufino, we were able to arrange a C boat entirely of MCR boys (and occasionally girls too).

In addition to our Pirates and Fairies crew dates with St Hilda's Women's BC and many others besides, in 6th week we had a 'night in' with our five OUBC Triallists who were good enough to come and talk our novices through this year's boat race and impart the benefits of their experience.

In Christ Church Regatta all 3 men's crews won their first race on Wednesday. Unfortunately Thursday and Friday's racing was cancelled due to the weather and the regatta resumed on Saturday using a shortened course from OUBC to the Head of the River. Despite an admirable performance from both the B and MCR crews they were eliminated, though I am pleased to say they had an enjoyable term's rowing, achieved a lot and we have built some excellent rowing potential for Torpids out of them. However, Darren Chadwick's coaching efforts with the Men's A boat certainly paid off and they were unfortunate to lose by a canvas to Exeter A, the crew which went on to win the whole event.

On an aside, eight members of St Catz went to the British Indoor Rowing Champs in Birmingham National Indoor Arena. Kevin Skinner, our beloved RS Chairman, cast down the gauntlet with a respectable 6.50s time. OUBC triallists apart, Australian MCR import James Hutton managed to do us proud with a 6.26 minute time, despite heavy drinking, partying and rough and tumble on every crew date, as well as Steve Wicks who pulled a decent 6.40 time and achieved a new personal best. I pulled a diabolical time myself, but excuse myself with having eaten too many Mars bars while sitting writing emails to disorganised rowers.

After Christ Church, there was one final challenge: Wallingford Head. Catz entered one men's VIII, which trained in our new and rather sexy Sims boats (bringing our complement of VIIIs up to seven). Despite only training during Eighth Week, and having four novices in the boat, they put in an excellent performance coming second in the Novice competition by only 10 seconds over 5km. All who took part are to be congratulated on a splendid effort.

It has been a tough but successful term, with many ups and downs. Having a boathouse and boats makes my and Amy's lives a whole lot less stressful. A huge amount of effort went into sorting this out and I would particularly like to thank James Bennett for his stalwart performance throughout, and all those people who have helped and advised me over the summer. The boathouse is now fully refurbished and, with new furniture and heaters, is more sociable than ever. We have new equipment and a huge men's squad to use to produce two killer boats for Torpids, and at least a third of an excellent standard. We also have the largest coxing pool for recent years, thanks to Fleur-Estelle Shaw, our Captain of Coxes.

Thanks again to all those who have helped me this term, and well done to all crews. I am really excited about next year as I hope it is going to be one of our most successful for some time. Merry Christmas!

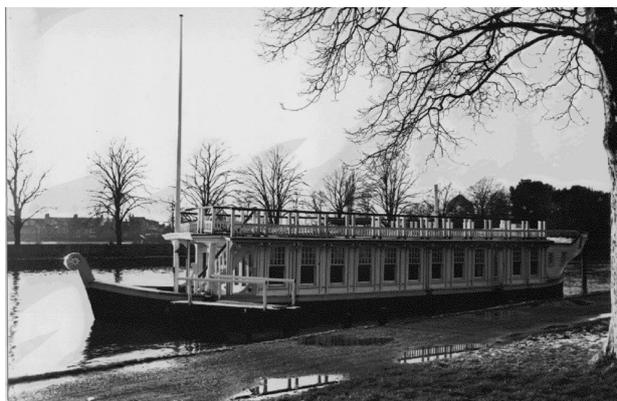
The River in the mid-20th Century

C Graham Kaye (M.48)

Though the shape of boats and the attire of the oarsmen has changed somewhat I doubt if an oarsman in 1950 would have seen a great deal of difference in the River than his counterpart in 1900.

Most Colleges still rowed from Barges moored alongside Christ Church Meadow though by 1948 a small number of College has built boathouses upstream of the junction of the Isis and Cherwell, but most of us were still based on the old Barges.

Though they all appeared to be different, this was because of their styling and decor (they were painted in the College colours) and they all basically followed the same pattern. Each barge was attached by heavy metal rings to great wooden piles driven into the river bed. This allowed them to rise and fall with the river level. Access to each barge was along a gang plank from the path at the edge of the meadow. This gang-plank led onto an open foredeck, which in turn gave access to the main entrance. Also from the foredeck was a staircase (sometimes two) leading to the roof of the barge which, surrounded by railings, provided a large socialising area and an excellent viewpoint of the river during Torpids, Eights and so forth.



The last St Catherine's Barge.

The rooms, usually two, on the barges occupied the full width of the boat and occupied the full length of the structure beyond the foredeck. The first room was a large saloon used for meetings and socialising. Beyond this was a second, similar sized room, which was used for changing and the racking of oars.

Facilities were primitive. Heat was usually from a stove in the saloon, which backed onto the changing room. Washing was in water pumped from the river and the toilet facilities amounted to little more than a funnel which deposited the waste into the river.

I understand that at one time the barges were moved to indicate the position of the Colleges at the end of Eights but by my time the majority were in

too fragile a state to risk moving them. On the Cats Barge many of the bottom timbers resembled sponges and one of the regular jobs on arrival was to pump out the bilge. Each barge had a landing raft attached to the river side, where eights and other craft could be pulled in. Between the barges and the bank most Colleges had a fixed tub for static coaching. This was a rectangular box, fitted with two stretchers and two sliding seats and a pair of outriggers. The occupant, he could row either side, used a standard oar that had had slots cut into the blade so that water passed through the oar rather than the oar moving the boat.

Though the Barges were very attractive and romantic they were very inconvenient as the boats had to be kept elsewhere. Many Colleges had racks in the OUBC Boathouse; others kept their boats at Timms, a boathouse on the site of the present College facility, while the rest of us racked our boats at Salter's Yard, access to which was from just north of Folly Bridge. Often during training we had to queue up to land at the end of the afternoon. Those of us who boated from Salter's simply carried our oars along Christ Church Meadow, but those using Timms or the OUBC had to cross to the towpath using a ferry punt. These were wide open-ended punts which would carry up to a dozen people with ease. Colleges lucky enough to have a waterman could call on him to ferry them while the rest of us relied on friends to carry us across. We were fortunate and didn't need our punt very often. During Eights, etc, we employed a part-time waterman to operate the punt for us.

By the 1960's most of the Barges had either sunk or been scrapped as repairs would have been prohibitive. Those who saw the TV programme where the Water Music was played on a Barge will get an idea of what the boats looked like. The Barge employed was originally the Balliol barge, later used by Cats.

15 Years Ago

In the summer of 1990, the Boat Club secured its first sponsorship deal, with Coopers & Lybrand Deloitte¹, largely thanks to Richard Peters, the RS Chairman at the time. This rapidly bore fruit with the purchase of a coxed four, *The Floating Bear*, which is still in use.

It was also back in the heady days before global warming was invented — training in Hilary Term 1991 was severely curtailed with river closures due to ice. With just 3 crews more-or-less holding their positions, St Catz had a fairly quiet Torpids with the

¹which evolved, via just 'Coopers & Lybrand', into 'Price-waterhouseCoopers', our present sponsors

men's 1st Torpid dropping 1 place to 9th on the river while the women rose 1 place to 3rd.

There were 3 Catz men in that year's Boat Race crew: the cox, Neil Chugani; the stroke and President, Rupert Obholzer; and no.6, a certain Matthew Pinsent. Despite trailing for a significant part of the race, Oxford went on to win by 4 lengths. In the following newsletter I questioned the claim that they had actually been in control throughout, which elicited a letter signed by two of the crew assuring me that that was indeed the case. Or words to that effect, anyway.

In Eights we managed to put out 5 crews but the men's 1st Eight had a frustrating time and ended up dropping 2 places to 18th. The women's 1st Eight were disadvantaged by still having to row in *Piglet*, by then 8 years old and showing it. However, starting 15th on the river (the same position as this coming summer, in fact) they managed 3 bumps to regain their place in the 1st Division and only narrowly missed blades.

News from Alumni

Steve Eyles (M.86)

I'm sitting in my hot tub in the back garden surrounded by a foot of snow. The Connecticut river just a 1/4 mile away is frozen over so no rowing there (not that I've set foot in an VIII in 10 years!). Recently had a book published: *Mass Spectrometry in Biophysics* which won't make the Pullitzer short list, but is a good read if you're into that sort of thing. Happy training and good luck to all crews in 2006.

Jen Atkinson (M.89)

I've now completed my two years of Chinese Studies at Oxford. To update those of you to whom I haven't spoken for a while, I'm now living and studying in Taipei, Taiwan, with a view to improving my Chinese sufficiently to be able to work in a Chinese-speaking (or at least China-related) environment by this time next year.

Jim Morrish (M.89)

I'm currently working as a freelance consultant, mainly in the telecoms industry, and living in London and the South of France. Lisa and I met in Singapore in 2000, married in 2003, and Miles Benjamin was born in May of this year. As far as rowing goes, I do actually own a Concept II, but nowadays I spend more time walking around it than sitting on it ...

Mike Bull (M.99)

Having spent the last 2 years printing and binding theses in Oxford, I have finally managed to find a 'real' job, get out of Oxford, and I am off to the

south coast to retrain [as an air traffic controller]. I could be tempted to try coastal rowing, but having managed to spend my brief tenure as Men's Captain at Wallingford RC conveniently injured (self-inflicted: don't run over chains) I may yet find excuses not to.

Helen Bray (M.00)

Although I haven't been in a boat for a good couple of years now, I do still miss it. I'm currently living in Worcester, where there's a good club, but fat chance of getting in a crew at the moment — I'm working as a police officer, so my shifts are at even less sociable hours than an early outing ...

OUBC Triallists

Our five triallists were distributed among the top three OUBC boats in the Fours Head (Colin Smith winning the Elite 4- class in Isis I) and were all still going strong by the time of the OUBC Trials Race on 13th December, which meant that Catz men filled 5 of the 18 seats available (beating last year's record of 4), including both stroke seats. In an exciting race, *Slash*, stroked by Colin Smith with Bruce Magee at no.6, took an early lead but *Burn*, coxed by Nick Brodie, stroked by Bastien Ripoll and with Stephan Moelvig at no.2, managed to pull back level by Chiswick Eyot and finally broke clear after Barnes Bridge to win by just over a length of clear water.

In yesterday's GB trials, Colin Smith finished 3rd in the pairs division while former Catz oarsman Andy Hodge (M.04) also finished 3rd in the single sculls.

Coming Up ...

In the next newsletter there will reports on training for Torpids and of the progress of our OUBC Triallists, the results of the Boat Name auction and a look at the Boat Club of 25 years ago when, erm, I was men's Captain (seems longer!) and Sharon Macdonald then Cathy Panter-Brick were women's captains. If you rowed that year, you are particularly invited to contribute something for the 'News from Alumni' section.

Anu Dudhia

email: dudhia@atm.ox.ac.uk

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

Diary

1-4 March 2006	Torpids
4th March 2006	RS AGM & Dinner
1st April 2006	Henley Boat Races
2nd April 2006	The Boat Race
24-27 May 2006	Eights