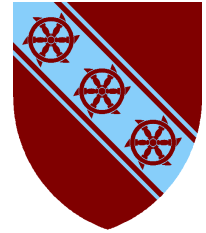




St Catherine's College Rowing Society
St Catherine's College
Oxford OX1 3UJ



8th May, 2010

In this issue . . .

The various Oxford-Cambridge Boat Races took place over the Easter vacation: the Oxford women had a good year, but unfortunately so did the Cambridge men. We have the reports, and an article from our man inside the light dark blue camp. There is a brief piece on the Boat Club of 40 years ago and news of another of the mysterious Torpids Fours tankards. Finally, details of Summer Eights, including arrangements for the buffet lunch in the Boathouse on the Saturday of Eights and, in the Diary section, a list of the upcoming London drinks events.

Results

Henley Boat Races, 28th March

Women's Reserves	Oxford	3½ L	6:10
Women's Lightweights	Oxford	2¾ L	6:01
Women's Blue Boat	Oxford	4 L	5:56
Men's Lightweights	Cambridge	2 ft	5:28

Tideway Boat Races, 3rd April

Men's Reserves	Cambridge	2 L	18:03
Men's Blue Boat†	Cambridge	1½ L	17:39

†2: Martin Walsh (M07, now at Green-Templeton)



Are you sitting comfortably? Then we'll begin. The crews line up at the start of the 2010 Lightweight Women's Boat Race at Henley.

Henley Boat Races

The year's race programme started with a competition between 'representative' Oxford and Cambridge College crews. It has to be admitted that Oxford, represented by Balliol men and Worcester women, were soundly beaten (I got the impression that Cambridge took this new event a bit more seriously than Oxford).

On to the 'varsity' racing proper, the women's reserves were first off with Osiris taking the early lead over Blondie and then simply extending it to a comfortable victory, and avenging last year's defeat. Next up were the women's lightweights, an event which often has close verdicts but this year Oxford again finished well ahead.

Shortly before the start of the women's Blue Boat race, it was announced over the PA that Oxford were conceding a remarkable 10 kg a 'man' to Cambridge (as someone put it, it was like Cambridge having an extra woman in their boat, and a large one at that). However, any attempt at physical intimidation would have been lost on Oxford who'd already soundly beaten Cambridge by 20 s in the Women's Eights Head a couple of weeks earlier. Sure enough, the race went according to form, with Oxford's 4 length victory the largest margin in any of this year's Boat Races. The OUWBC run of 3 victories is now also the longest winning streak in any of the Oxford-Cambridge Boat Races.

The Oxford men's lightweights had their own run of 7 consecutive victories emphatically terminated by Cambridge last year. This time Oxford set off aggressively and led Cambridge for all but a handful of strokes in the entire race. Unfortunately those handful came at the end and Cambridge won by 2 feet.

No Catz participants in this year's Henley Boat Races (although see Gareth Morgan's article later in this newsletter), but a couple of ex-participants were spotted putting in anniversary appearances on the towpath: Ian Robson (M.82), 25 years on from his race with the men's lightweights, and Emily Woodson (M.97), 10 years on from the OUWBC victory which finally ended Cambridge's domination of the 1990s.

President: Bruce Mitchell
 Vice Presidents: Don Barton,
 Richard Peters,
 Sir Matthew Pinsent CBE,
 Ben Sylvester.

Men's Lightweight Trials

Gareth Morgan

An article which originally appeared in the lightweights' old-members association newsletter.

Trialing has been the hardest, but the most rewarding experience of my life so far. After finishing rowing at school and with the Welsh Junior Men's Team, I decided that I wanted to take my rowing to a higher level. OULRC seemed welcoming and ambitious. I thoroughly enjoyed my first month of training, meeting new people, exploring Oxford and rowing in fine weather. It felt good (most of the time) to get back into proper training after the summer. The first 'pain train' (endurance circuit) is ingrained firmly in my memory. While the circuit itself is hellish blur, it is the inability to sit up in bed or walk properly for 5 days afterwards that I remember clearly.

The seat racing camp in Tilburg was, in my opinion, the defining period of the squad's development. We were based on a canal, which was possibly the most perfect piece of water I have ever had the pleasure of rowing on. No stream. No wind. No other crews. Once every few hours a barge would come steaming by.

Prior to the camp I thought I knew what rowing in cold weather was like. This cold weather was just obscene. Thankfully we had our animal-themed bungalows, or jungalows as they were known, to live in. These were modestly sized, but crucially, well heated. The tranquility of this beautiful place was blown to smithereens by two-and-a half days straight in the stroke seat of a pair followed by 2 days of full-on seat racing. Aside from the usual (profuse) swearing, the most frequently uttered words were 'cold' and 'sav- age'.

On several nights, there was a real risk of the canal freezing. Each morning, we would peer out of our jungalows across the lake (connected to the canal) scanning for ice. Neither froze over, however on the final 2 days we had to train on land as it was deemed too dangerous to go on the water. This was frustrating, but in the words of Pedro [chief coach], 'You just got to go on with it'.

The extremely friendly and helpful Vidar Rowing Club tempered this hostile environment. Words cannot describe how good a hot meal is after a hard day's seat racing! I don't think we could have run a camp like that without their help. Tilburg was, physically and psychologically, extremely demanding. I went home broken. It wasn't until afterwards I realized just how much everyone gained from it. I, for one, am itching to go back!



Strong vocal support for Oxford as they lead Cambridge at the half-way point in this year's men's lightweight race. Unfortunately it was not enough.

I am very pleased with my technical improvements this year. I entered the trialing process with lots of rowing experience, but without the technique to really back it up. Now, I have a great deal more confidence in my boat moving ability. Despite not making the Blue Boat, I value my place as the strokeman of the 4+. I see it as an excellent platform to improve my racing, having been sat in the bow pair of crews for several years. I am very excited about our race against Cambridge, as earlier in the season, I was a little disheartened that CULRC did not field a second boat to race OULRC. It is highly likely that I, along with another two members of the 4+, will return next year, as we have all got a tremendous amount out of our time with OULRC.

On the Friday before the Henley Boat Races, the Oxford spare four beat Cambridge by just over a length over a 1000m.

Tideway Boat Races

Oxford were the bookies' clear favourites this year, with 3 ex-Olympic oarsmen on board, including the Winklevoss twins from the US, and Cambridge doing some late reshuffling.¹

Oxford, on the Surrey station, took the early lead and extended it round the Fulham bend which should have favoured Cambridge. Coming up to the Hammersmith bridge, with Cambridge only just about hanging on, it looked like one of the old-style Boat Races with the outcome well and truly decided before the half-way point. With the advantage of the long Surrey bend, all it needed was one decent push from Oxford to break clear ...

¹Risking accusations of post-event wisdom, I did plump for Cambridge in our local club's Boat Race sweepstake.

But it never happened. Cambridge were the crew which came back around the outside of the bend, drawing level by Chiswick steps and rowing away to just over a length's victory. It seems Oxford put too much into establishing their early lead, and Cambridge just paced themselves better.

The Isis-Goldie race seems to be almost completely ignored in the TV coverage nowadays, but judging from the brief race report it seems to have followed an ominously similar pattern.

OUBC Crews 2001–2010
Colleges ranked by no. seats

=1.	Christ Church	13
=1.	Oriel	13
=1.	St Catherine's	13
=4.	Pembroke	6
=4.	University	6
6.	Kellogg	5
7.	Brasenose	4
=8.	Jesus	3
=8.	Keble	3
=8.	St Edmund Hall	3
=8.	Wolfson	3

Martin Walsh, formerly of St Catz but now Green-Templeton College, was our only claim to representation in any of this year's Boat Races. He doesn't count as a Catz contribution to OUBC crews in the past 10 years, where we're still the top

College, but unlike last year it's now a 3-way split between ourselves, Oriel and Christ Church (with, respectively, one and two members of this year's crew). For combined OUBC and Isis crewmembers, Catz remain 2nd (with 23) to Oriel (26).

Forty Years Ago

In 1969–70, St Catz was a men's college and there were no women's divisions in Torpids or Eights.

Torpids in those days was a two-lane event: starting from the usual bungline positions on the towpath, crews split alternately between the two lanes, marked by buoys, and you could only bump the crew in your own lane, although finishing ahead of the crew in the other lane would also gain you a place. Rudders were bigger in those days — they had to be to get two crews racing side-by-side through the Gut.

The 1st Torpid rose four places, from 16th to 12th on the river, part of a trend which was to culminate in reaching 6th on the river in 1972. The 1st Eight also rose one place, from 16th to 15th.

The Captain was Nick Young. Following his tragic early death, his parents donated the Fawley Challenge Cup to Henley Royal Regatta in his memory, and there is a Nick Young College award for television work experience.



Torpids in 1969 with the St Catherine's 1st Torpid in the lower left. Note the lane marker in the lower centre. Note also the casual (and mutual) disregard of swans in the racing line.

The Wheel, 1970

Those who play squash will no doubt recall having seen various individuals straining hard at the weights room outside the squash courts. The chances are that these individuals were rowers busily training for Torpids, which took place in the fifth week of this term. Preparation brought success, for during the course of the event the first VIII climbed four places, thus moving up from the third to the second division. Worcester, Hertford, Merton and Lincoln were the crews that were overhauled by the Catz boat. With typical losers' grace, each sent a representative to the Bump Supper afterwards.

Summer Eights

Eights 2010 will run from 26–29th May. Racing is from noon–6.45pm, Wed–Fri, and 11am–5.45pm on Saturday. Catz have 4 crews in the fixed divisions, with several others attempting to qualify in Rowing On on 21st May. You should be able to follow their progress live on the OURCs web-pages and after racing on the RS web-pages. I'll be sending evening updates to everyone on the Rowing Society email list.

Eights 2010: Wednesday Start times

Crew	Div	Bungline	Time
Men's 1st Eight	I	9	6.45pm
Women's 1st Eight	II	1	5.15pm
Men's 2nd Eight	IV	8	3.30pm
Women's 2nd Eight	IV	8	2.55pm

NB: on Saturday all divisions race 1 hour earlier

Torpids Fours Trophies

I was contacted last year by George Takacs, currently resident in the US but who, when living in the Netherlands, had bought a 3-handled pewter mug in a flea-market in 1975. It bears the inscription ‘St Catherine’s Boat Club, Torpid Fours, 1901.’

Also listed are the names R.J. Sadler Bow, A.R Grant 2, S.E.B. Kennedy 3, C. F. Stephens Stk, B. Hydes Cox. On the third side is a shield with 3 8-spoke Catherine wheels on a diagonal band.



A 1901 St Catherine’s Torpids Fours tankard. Photo from George Takacs.

We’ve had these ‘St Catherine’s Torpids Fours’ tankards crop up before, in various shapes and styles, from 1883 and 1885 (newsletter 4th February 2007) and more recently 1903 (newsletter 28th March 2009), but we don’t really know what they were for. Our best guess at the moment is that they were awarded to the winners of some internal Boat Club competition for less experienced oarsmen (‘Torpids’, or ‘Toggers’, originally referring to 2nd boats).

Eights Lunch

James Bennett, Domestic Bursar

The College will be joining with Hertford and Green Templeton (together, hopefully with the other Colleges who share the Boat House) in organising a buffet lunch with a glass of wine at 1.00pm for those coming along to the Saturday of Eights Week (29 May). Tickets are £12 per person. Hertford JCR will be running a bar.

You should pay by cheque (payable to St Catherine’s College) which you should address to Luba Voinova, Domestic Co-ordinator at the College. You should mark on the back of the cheque the names of the persons attending and the words ‘Eights Buffet’.

Legibility of names will be important as the names on the reverse of cheques will be entered onto a list.

If you are in College before the event you can collect your lapel badge (the ticket) from Lizzie Andrews in the General Office, who will keep the list. If you are not in College before the event you will be able to obtain your badge from me, James Bennett, Home Bursar — the holder of the list on the day!

In planning terms it would be useful to know numbers by 19 May.



The Long Bridges Boathouse on the Saturday of last Summer Eights.

Coming Up ...

In the next newsletter there will be results and reports on Eights, the announcement of the winner of this year’s Ben Sylvester Award, an item on the Boat Club of 50 years ago (under the Captaincy of Hugh Moore), and prospects for the summer, including the Gaudy paddle (although there is also talk of alumni taking a boat out on the Sunday after Eights). Any items for inclusion in the ‘News from Alumni’ section are always welcome.

Anu Dudhia

email: dudhia@atm.ox.ac.uk

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

www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=93221115264

Diary

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| 13 May 2010 | London Drinks, The Blue Posts
81 Newman St, W1T 3EU |
| 21 May 2010 | Rowing On |
| 26–29 May 2010 | Summer Eights |
| 29 May 2010 | Boathouse Lunch |
| 30 May 2010 | Alumni paddle? (to be confirmed) |
| 10 June 2010 | London Drinks, The East India Club
16 St James’s Square, SW1Y 4LH |
| 26 June 2010 | Gaudy Paddle? (to be confirmed) |