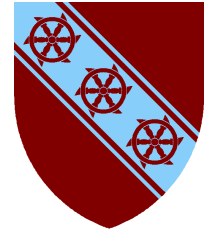




St Catherine's College Rowing Society
St Catherine's College,
Oxford OX1 3UJ



14th May, 2011

In this issue . . .

The main news items since the last issue have been the Oxford-Cambridge Boat Races on the Tideway and at Henley. Apart from my reports we also have the view from the Isis cox's seat.

A couple of our alumni report in on recent activities, and the history section features events of 35 years ago, when Catz women first took to the water (and I still haven't managed to find anyone who can name the cox in that photograph of them). There's also an analysis of how 'boatie' various colleges are (in the case of Catz, not very!).

The Boat Club isn't planning on entering any regattas this term so Eights will be their first, and last, race fixture. But we have the essential information for spectators: where you can get food and drink. Oh, and what time our crews will be racing.

Results

Tideway Boat Races, 26th March

Men's Reserves†	Oxford	6 L	17:38
Men's Blue Boat	Oxford	4 L	17:32

†Cox: Zoe de Toledo



An anxious parent waits on the bank during the Henley Boat Races, although you don't get 5 Olympic gold medals without learning a bit about how to stay relaxed.

Henley Boat Races, 27th March

Women's Reserves	Cambridge	Dqd	
Women's Lightweights	Cambridge	1 3/4 L	6:43
Women's Blue Boat	Oxford	1 L	6:24
Men's Lightweights	Oxford	Cnvs	5:54

The Boat Race

This year's Boat Race was very much a 'classic' in the sense of one crew getting ahead and then just continuing to row away — none of this 21st Century nonsense with the lead changing half way through the race.

The main surprise was that it was Oxford who won. Cambridge had been heavy favourites, mostly, it seems, just on the basis of having more returning Blues than Oxford rather than on any difference in form during training. However, Oxford also made a last minute change to their seating, introducing a tandem rig. That's not the sort of thing you'd expect from a crew confident of victory. So either Oxford were inclined to agree with the bookies' assessment, or someone had a cunning plan to make even more money by placing a late bet.

Anyway, off the start, Cambridge certainly seemed to act like a crew that felt they only had to treat the event as a time-trial in order to win. They appeared to ignore Oxford's attacks and just concentrate on settling into their own rhythm. Approaching Hammersmith bridge, Oxford had done enough work to get their noses ahead with the big Surrey bend about to unravel in their favour — basically the same position they reached last year. Then, Cambridge had managed to maintain the overlap and went on to overtake Oxford, but this year Oxford made no mistake and executed a powerful push to gain clear water. That's probably the point when Cambridge realised that they were in a race, but by then it was too late for Plan B.

The previous day Oxford also won the Veterans' Boat Race for the first time since 2003. The Oxford crew included two Catz alumni: Rupert Obholzer (M.88) and Matt Pinsent (M.89). In fact Matt had rather a busy weekend since he then umpired the Isis-Goldie race . . .

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

The Isis-Goldie Race

Zoe de Toledo¹, Isis cox

On March 26th I had the great privilege of steering the 2011 Oxford reserve crew, Isis, to victory. Having watched our spare pair and veterans' crews both defeat Cambridge in their earlier races both Isis and the Blue Boat went into their respective boat races with confidence and excitement.

The Isis crew this year was predominantly made up of lightweights and true Oxford-bred college rowers and, despite weighing over a stone a man less than our opposition, Goldie, we knew our mental and technical skills were strong enough to overcome any physical power we may be lacking.

We often discuss the 'perfect' race plan, but you never expect it to actually happen. So, despite our usual average start, I was somewhat surprised to find myself level with Goldie's 3 man less than 3 minutes in to the race. When we had clear water at the Mile Post, about a quarter of the race in, I realized this was a lead Goldie would never recover from. Our winning time of 17:38, 19 seconds ahead of Goldie, also put us 6 seconds ahead of the Cambridge Blue Boat's finishing time. Isis is therefore proud to have helped our own winning Blue Boat to truly make sure that Cambridge feel they finished third!



Zoe de Toledo, front (obviously) with the 2009 GB Women's VIII which won Gold at the U23 World Championships.

¹Zoe also wrote a piece in the 2010 St Catherine's Year at the start of her OUBC trials



Oxford (far side) with a narrow lead over Cambridge half-way through this year's Women's Boat Race.

Henley Boat Races

As last year, the event opened with the College Boat Races. Cambridge's Caius (men) and Pembroke (women) defeated Oxford's Christ Church and Magdalen crews. But I missed all that.

Having finally negotiated the traffic jam on Remenham Lane I arrived just in time to see Osiris disentangle themselves from Blondie after a blade clash and finish several lengths clear. However, the umpire decided that they had fouled Blondie and disqualified them.

Cambridge's Lightweight Women also won relatively comfortably and the Dark Blue supporters were starting to get nervous.

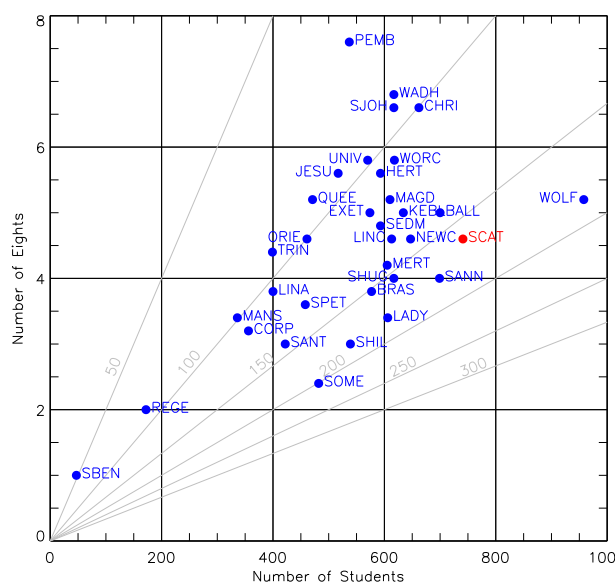
Five weeks earlier, Oxford's top women's crew had been soundly beaten by Cambridge at a head race on the same stretch of water. But it seems that a certain amount of arm-twisting had been going on and for this race Oxford boated 5 of last year's winning crew. However, all the press attention focussed on the relatively inexperienced newcomer in their 4 seat: Natalie Redgrave (yes, *his* daughter). Whatever hopes Cambridge had had of overturning the longest current winning streak in any of the Varsity Boat Races gradually disappeared as Oxford took an early, narrow lead and gradually extended it to a length by the finish to register their fourth successive victory in this event.

The men's lightweight race is usually the one that keeps the finish umpire on his toes (although I believe there's also a video camera involved nowadays). As last year, Oxford started strongly and took a length's lead. Then, as last year, Cambridge started clawing their way back. But, *unlike* last year, Oxford just held on to win by a canvas.

Boatiful Colleges

It is commonly claimed, probably correctly that the Boat Club is the largest club or society within the College. However, since Catz is the largest Oxford college by student numbers, while the Boat Club is of only average size, it makes me wonder how much bigger other College Boat Clubs are relative to their student bodies.

The chart below plots the average number of crews in Eights for the past 5 years against the 2010 student numbers for each College. For student numbers, I've grouped together Wolfson and St Cross since they row as a single Boat Club.



Average number of crews in Eights in the past 5 years plotted against 2010 Student Numbers for each College. The diagonal lines show number of students per Eight.

St Benet's, a theological institution, stands out by maintaining a crew each year despite a total student body of 47 (Boatiness being next to Godliness?). But among the major colleges, Pembroke is clearly ahead of the pack, managing one crew for every 70 students. Most Colleges lie somewhere between one crew for every 100–150 students, but Catz only manages one crew for every 161 students. Put another way, if Catz Boat club was proportionally the same size as Pembroke's we'd be averaging over 10 crews in Eights rather than 4.6. I'll leave that thought with next year's committee.

35 Years Ago ...

In 1975, five former men's Colleges, including St Catherine's, went mixed, doubling the number of Colleges admitting women. As a result, the following year a women's division was created in Summer Eights.

The following text is from the 1976 St Catherine's Year.

St Catherine's Day this year proved to be a most auspicious day for the Boat Club as it marked the launching of the new college 'four', given to the College by Ben Sylvester Jr. to commemorate Censor V. J. K. Brook

Lord Bullock officially launched the new boat, which was then rowed by four contemporaries of Censor Brook and Ben Sylvester (W. C. Wright, D. Barton, T. Hancox and T. T. Coulson with C. G. Kaye coxing), who, to the delight and admiration of those watching from the Barge, proved that they could still handle the boat as well as any present members of the College.

As was the case during the last academic year, the main event for the Boat Club this year proved to be Summer Eights. Five St Catherine's boats were on the river, including for the first time, a ladies' Eight. In the Second Division the 1st VIII rowed over on all four days. Tristram Sutton, having rowed for Isis in his first two terms, came into the boat and proved to be a tower of strength. The ladies, under the organisation of Christine Maggs, with the experience of two University oarswomen, Kim Adams and Pauline Symonds, proved that in the Ladies' Division, organised for the first time this year, St Catherine's will be a force to be reckoned with.



The first St Catherine's women's VIII, Eights 1976. Crew: Pauline Symonds (bow), Christine Maggs, Gill Smith, Kate Halson, Robin Throssel, Hilary Arnold, Nicole Socher, Kim Adams (str), [cox not identified].

News from Alumni

Hansen Wendlandt (M.97) Since Anu last complained about my catches in 1998, I took about six years of serious training and another four years of fun coaching. The last couple years, however, I've moved into the ministry, especially with teenagers and vulnerable populations. This April, for my first return visit to Oxford (how has so much changed in such an old city?), I had the pleasure of joining a group of current Catz rowers [*there was a Boat Club training camp in progress*]. Thanks to them for pulling me around!

Peter Goult (M.04) I successfully cycled from John O'Groats to Lands End with Kane Moore, (Catz Novice 2004), in 11 days over the bank holiday period. We had superb weather, about 30 punctures in total and received some incredible hospitality. The longest day was 120 miles from Edinburgh to Penrith, and the shortest was the final day, 9 miles from Penzance to Land's End. We foolishly took the Corrieyairack Pass which is the highest public road in the UK, purely to cut out a long stretch of A-Road — it ended up taking us over 9 hours, most of which we were carrying our road bikes, but massive pay-off on the other side when we road through a herd of 50 wild deer down the valley.

We have successfully raised £ 2500 for charity (Kane for the Anne Frank Trust, and me for the Save the Children Libya Campaign) but if people wish to donate, our pages are still available at: www.justgiving.com/teams/groatstolandsend

I'm also wanting to do some doubling on the Tide-way this summer if you can recommend a club, or know any alumni that fancy it.

Eights

Eights 2011 will run from 1st–4th June. Racing is from noon–6.45pm, Wed–Fri, and 11am–5.45pm on Saturday. Catz have 4 crews in the fixed divisions, with a couple more men's crews who'll have to qualify in Rowing On on 27th May.

The usual Saturday buffet lunch has been relocated from the boathouse to the Hertford Graduate Centre (the big glass building adjacent to the towpath at Folly Bridge). Tickets are £12 a head, including 2 glasses of wine. Contact Anna Baskerville at Hertford (anna.baskerville@hertford.ox.ac.uk).

However, during the week the Boat Club plans to sell refreshments from our club-room and Hertford will be running a bar in theirs on the Saturday, so spectators won't be short of sustenance at the boathouse itself.

Supporters are encouraged to come to the Catz boathouse club room at 4.45pm on the Saturday, when the winner of this year's Ben Sylvester Award will be announced.

Eights 2011: Wednesday Start times

Crew	Div	Bungline	Time
Men's 1st Eight	I	6	6.45pm
Women's 1st Eight	II	4	5.15pm
Men's 2nd Eight	IV	7	3.30pm
Women's 2nd Eight	IV	9	2.55pm

NB: on Sat. all divisions race 1 hour earlier

Summer Dinner

The first annual summer dinner will be held at the Oxford and Cambridge Club, on Pall Mall on Friday 24th June. The event will be a chance for crews to finish the year off in style and for Alumni to meet up in the impressive Club rooms. More information to follow, but if interested please contact Darren Chadwick (darren.chadwick@brite-green.co.uk).

Coming Up . . .

In the next issue there will be the results and reports on Eights and a look at the events of 45 years ago (under the Captaincy of Michael Ellison).

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

21 May 2011	Gaudy for 'The Society'
1–4 June 2011	Eights
24 June 2011	O&C Club Dinner
2 July 2011	Gaudy for 1990–99