



12' Presentation Rowing Oar Trophy, Oxford University, 1899 Balliol College

£2,600



REF: 30304

Height: 367 cm (144.5")

Width: 15 cm (5.9")

Depth: 9 cm (3.5")

## Description

Antique Rowing Oar, 1899 Balliol College Oxford, Head of the River.

The full-length oar is an original traditional presentation rowing oar with gilt calligraphy and Balliol college insignias. The rowing blade is made by Ayling & Sons, Vauxhall, London, fitted with their patent Button & Guard Plate. It is a beautiful oar and in original condition. The calligraphy denotes the crew's names and weights with the oar being No.4 denoting it belonged to W. Mitchell - Thomson. Most probably William Lawson Mitchell-Thomson, 1st Baron Selsdon KBE PC (15 April 1877 - 24 December 1938), known as Sir William Mitchell-Thomson, 2nd Baronet. We also have two other oars once belonging to Mitchell - Thomson, Head of the River - Torpid 1898 & 2nd Torpid 1997.

The calligraphy on this blade reads:-

Balliol College Torpid 1899  
Head of the River  
Bow G.H. Moorhead 9st.12lbs  
2. J. Edgar 10.11  
3. E.H. Pelham 12.8½  
4. W. Mitchell - Thomson 12.4  
5. R.B. Merriman 13.12  
6. E.J. Skinner 11.10  
7. C.N. Dyer 11.3  
Str. C.F. Whitlaw 10.2  
Cox. H.G. Argles 8st.8lbs

As the oar is full length (12 foot) shipping can be quite expensive. We have come up with an ingenious way to cut the oar so as to make shipping cheaper, the oar can then be easily reassembled. One of the images shows different images of an oar that has been cut down. It is cut by the leather sleeve so the joint is less visible or obvious. The oar can then be bolted together to make the oar one solid piece.

Please do enquire about the different shipping options.

Any crew which records four consecutive bumps is said to have 'gained their oars'. The prize being a full-size oar decorated with the names of the full crew in gold lettering on the college colours for each rower. The cox is given a decorated rudder and the coach receives a decorated wooden shield with a mock-up of the bow end of a boat.

Both Oxford and Cambridge Universities host two university bumps races yearly, each lasting several days. The races are for eights (i.e. eight rowers and a cox), each representing one of the university's various colleges. One of the races is held in early spring and the other in early summer, in Oxford they are called 'Torpids' in the spring and 'Eights' in the summer, in Cambridge these are called 'Lent Bumps' and 'May Bumps'. The leading crews of the Lent Bumps go on to race the leading Oxford Torpids crews at the Henley Boat Races around Easter.

The first attested bumps race took place in Oxford in 1815 and was between two eights from Brasenose College and Jesus College. Twelve years later Lent Bumps racing commenced at Cambridge University. As the Isis and Cam are long narrow rivers, not ideal for normal side by side racing, Bumps racing evolved.

The competing crews line up bow-to-stern in order, one behind the other with gaps of about 1½ boat lengths between them. The start of the race commences with the firing of a cannon, the idea to progress up their division by attempting to catch and Bump (touch) the boat in front whilst simultaneously trying not to be Bumped by the boat behind. The ultimate aim becoming top of the first division and "Head Of The River".  
When a bump has tak...