

## **DRAFT**

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Alex Collins  
28<sup>th</sup> May 2006

A short account of the  
PETERHOUSE BOAT CLUB  
1828 – 1978

By Roland Mayer  
With charts compiled and drawn by Tim Ambrose

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## FOREWORD

Most of the best experiences in life come as surprises. Apart from being elected Master of Peterhouse, nothing has come as a greater surprise to me than to find myself President of the Peterhouse Boat Club. As a non-rowing man I have had a lot to learn. Among other things I have come to appreciate the truth of Professor Martin Plumley's assertion at a recent Bumps Supper that there is nothing much wrong with a college when its boats are doing well.

The Boat Club is a focus and gauge of college loyalty; and few bodies of men have a more vivid sense of history. It is entirely appropriate that the club should be celebrating its sesquicentenary at a time when the college is actively preparing for its Septcentenary.

One way of marking the passing of a milestone is to draw inspiration for the future from a contemplation of the past. Roland Mayer, himself an old member of the P.B.C. of notable dedication, has placed us all under a further debt by compiling the present history. The story he tells is one of many ups and downs. Recent years have witnessed a notable resurgence in the prowess of Peterhouse oarsmen. What is of even greater moment, to judge from past history, is the number of men coming forward to man the boats. Many more bumps stand between us and a climax worthy of 1984. With five crews the Club is well placed to repeat the triumphs of old.

The President

## INTRODUCTION

On April 29 1828 some men of St. Peter's College - their names seem to be past recovery - joined the bumping races on the Cam which had been officially established in the previous year. Except for an intermission from 1833-5, in 1836, and during the Great War the activity of the boat club is unbroken. It is not only one of the oldest of the college boat clubs, but is the longest lasting undergraduate society in Peterhouse. It is therefore proper that its one hundred and fiftieth anniversary be commemorated, however insufficiently, in this pamphlet.

The minute books of the club are naturally the most important source of information. They are all preserved and date from 1836 when the club was refounded; quotations have been freely taken from them and are marked in the usual fashion. Our account books date from October 1850, and they cast a bright light upon the daily conditions of rowing in the middle years of the last century. More practically, they give the names of members. But in 1884 the Amalgamated Athletic Club was set up to handle the financial affairs of all the College's sporting societies. From that date the account books no longer list members, though the disbursements remain fascinating (e.g., to towpath sweepers). It is a pity that at this time too the Honorary Secretaries gave up the practice of listing newly elected members in the Michaelmas term. These can sometimes be gathered from the crews of college trial eights, which tended to be made up of freshmen. But the method is not reliable and it is my hope that no important figure in the life of the club or College has been slighted by omission. T.A. Walker's 'Admissions to Peterhouse', 1615-1911, has been invaluable in tracing the careers of members and in clarifying affinities. But men who came up in the 90's had not begun to make their mark by the time Walker published, and so it is again possible that something of note has been passed over.

The account as a whole reflects my own interest in the conditions of rowing in the distant past. After the Great War there seems to have been little alteration to the present day, and from the late 20's on there are happily many members still alive to whose memories this short account could not aspire to do justice. It was my purpose to record what could only be with difficulty, recovered from accounts of the nineteenth century. Thus in the twentieth my focus has been on the periods of greatest success: the late 20's, middle 50's, and the present day.

The histories of other boat clubs have been of use for they often include accounts of riverine encounters with 'ye Pet', as in early days our boat was known. Rouse Ball's history of the First Trinity (1906) is particularly readable. The histories of the following clubs have been consulted: Christ's, Trinity Hall, Jesus, and Lady Margaret; the last two clubs printed their minute books in the last century. Valuable information is to be found in Bateman's 'Aquatic Notes' (1852), Armytage's 'Cam and Cambridge Rowing' (1886) and Lehmann's 'Complete Oarsman'. I should also like to thank T.G. Askwith, C.M. Beavis, J.E. Cox, T.G. Hewlett, J.G. Miller, L.B.H. Reford, and J.A. Sankey for troubling to write me some account of their time in the P.B.C.

Our greatest debt is to Tim Ambrose whose patience in producing the clear and accurate charts of the progress of the College boats saved me much work and greatly facilitated the narration of the Club's activities: the pamphlet is very much a collaboration. Its function is, as I said, commemorative; by those of us whose happiest times at Peterhouse were spent upon the waters of the Cam and in the company of our fellow oarsmen (not to mention coaches and coxswains) this short history may not be found unwelcome.

1828 - 1842

In a little book called 'Facetiae Cantabrigienses' there is an account of a water-party, dated 1822; some men of various colleges hired a six-oar, the 'Glory', from Cross, and rowed to 'Backsbite' lock; on the way they encountered the 'Stag' and raced her side by side. This seems to be the first account of an undergraduate race on the Cam. But rather like our colleges and University, bumping races were an importation from Oxford. In 1826 Trinity and St. John's took to the water and casually pursued one another, using, so sound tradition says, a trumpet note to signal a challenge. In those independent days a steerer could be fined a guinea for winding his horn without the whole consent of his crew. The University Boat Club was founded in 1827 and the bumping races came within its province, though they were by no means rigidly managed, as will soon become plain. The bumping races were continuous from October to May, but 1828 saw the last of autumn races. In the Michaelmas term of 1827 there were four boats in competition, but by the following spring Caius, Corpus, Jesus, Magdalene, Trinity Hall, and Peterhouse had put boats on the river; the smaller clubs hired them for the occasion from boat builders. That year, including the Michaelmas term, Peterhouse took to the water on seven of the twelve rowing days - one of which was postponed on account of rain - and was left second. On February 28 1829 the order of boats was: St. John's, Peterhouse, Corpus, and II Trinity; that night Peterhouse bumped John's, rowed over twice as Head of the River, and then 'took off', i.e. withdrew from the races - an act neither unusual nor disgraceful in that simpler age. Bateman however reckons that the men of Peterhouse preferred the excitement of making bumps to the honour of maintaining a high place on the river. After a good rest the boat reappeared on March 21, made five bumps in succession after starting at the bottom; it then rowed over once, was twice bumped, again rowed over and then took off. There was no racing that autumn.

The bumps course fell between the Chesterton lock, which was below the 'Pike and Eel', and a point roughly where the Trinity Boat House stands; there was a lock by the 'Fort St George', and the distance is about a mile and a quarter. Because of the sharp bend in the river so soon after the start no bump could be made until the boats were past the bumping post, which was two hundred yards up-stream of the Horse Grind (the grind, or ferry, was where Chesterton footbridge now spans the river). Accounts differ about the distance between boats at starting: Armytage says that they overlapped, Rouse Ball reckons a gap of twenty yards with ten yards of rope, Bateman thirty yards and Brittain ninety; (Rouse Ball also says that boats were pushed off from both banks). Whatever the fact of the matter, the bumping post gave boats time to sort themselves out; and the narrow gaps account for the not infrequent overbumps. Indeed in May 1831 Peterhouse had the doubtful distinction of being double overbumped by the Trinity 'Nautilus'; since 'ye Pet' had made its bump on the three preceding evenings, this disaster was reckoned an undeserved accident. In 1832 two divisions were formed, and this attests the rapid growth of the sport's popularity. That year Peterhouse inexplicably bumped both St. Catharine's and Queens' on the same evening, March 17; other crews however also claimed two bumps in one race from time to time, so this may be seen as another license of former days. This same year Trinity challenged the University to a race and Thomas Tunstall Smith of Peterhouse rowed at 3 in the 'Varsity crew.

During an intermission of three years in the Club's activities, the Cam underwent important changes which in the long run improved rowing here. The 'Fort St George'

lock was demolished and rebuilt up river, now Jesus lock. More importantly the Chesterton lock, despite the protests of oarsmen, was removed so as to leave the river unobstructed down to Baitsbite lock, a distance of three miles, three furlongs and 170 yards. The course, much as we know it to-day, was then adopted, but with only one finishing post set well below the 'Pike and Eel'. More room to row in allowed the boats to be started 140 feet apart; there were three guns fired at three minute intervals from the lock end.

Our minute books begin when the club was firmly established in the Lent term of 1836. Those who subscribed a guinea were full members and eligible to pull; those who subscribed half a guinea were honorary, non-pulling members. Of these latter there were many for much of the last century; it must be recalled that the boat club was a social organisation loosely grouped about rowing as a pastime. Thus some members might only wish to use the boat for pleasure outings or picnics; indeed the John's club had a very elaborate picnic set. Rowing in races formed no part of the non-pulling members' purpose in joining the P.B.C. Along with the rules fines are detailed: 5/- for absence from the boat on a 'pulling day' without prior notice having been given; 1/- for failure to wear the uniform (this is not, alas, described, though we shall see all too much of the club's concern with dress in later years). The steerer could fine men who were disorderly in the boat 1/-, 'and should the steersman himself use personal or irritating language he shall be subject to the same fine at the discretion of the Captain'.

The overall number of members from both groups was about thirty-four. At this point a caution must be made: it is impossible to be precise about numbers because men often went out of residence to study for examinations, or because for various reasons migrations to and from colleges were rather more common, or because, like one Bythesea, they were 'plucked for copying at Little-go'. As will be seen there was as yet little restriction upon terms of eligibility for rowing, but after 1841, when Caius secured the Headship by summoning up three old members from London, only residents of the University might race. One of this Club's earliest members was W.S. Parish whose three sons were in time also members. In April of 1836 it was resolved to practise every evening at six o'clock which, if adhered to, was for the time unusual diligence. (Hall in those days was a late afternoon meal; the men found supper for themselves at a later hour).

In 1838 the Club reorganised itself after a short dissolution, and forty-seven men proposed themselves for membership; of these eighteen were prepared to pull on race days. (One was Sir Matthew Begbie, later Chief Justice of British Columbia, where the memory of him as a hanging judge is still fresh). The subscription was now 10/- a term with an entrance fee of a sovereign. On March 21 1838 'it was agreed that the uniform of the crew be a grey whalebone hat' - perhaps worn whilst rowing - 'white shirts, white trousers, and blue handkerchief with white border.' The colour may have been settled upon at an earlier date but this is the first reference to blue as the club's colour. In the minute, however, this is altered to read 'black'; the likely reason is the death of the Master, Dr Barnes, whose notorious election in 1788 was followed by a tenure of office lasting half a century.

An eight-oared boat was hired from Cross for £12 and was named 'ye Pet'. It started bottom of the division and in the eight racing days of the Easter term rose eleven places, though only five were won by bumps. The Secretary proudly concluded his term's notes thus: 'It appears that ye Pet bumped on every occasion on which any chance was afforded them (always without difficulty) and ye boat as then manned was capable of better things having once when pulling against time to decide a bet pulled

over ye racing distance in 7' 28" (by a stop watch) and on another occasion when practising pulled over ye same distance in 7' 11" (Bateman cites for 1837 a time of 7' 40"). 'Having then as is evident, made a good start, after ye fame of ye "Old Pet" had so long subsided, as-well-as-under,... it is most sincerely hoped that all ye members of ye College both present and future will support and emulate ye good example which ye above crew have set, and improve on that place.' This exhortation was not long from its fulfilment. (Betting, by the way, seems not to have been reprehensible in boating circles; even in 1862 bets were apparently made on the outcome of a College fours race.)

In the Lent term of 1839 'it was resolved that five gentlemen... should go round to the Master (W. Hodgson) and Fellows for the purpose of raising some money to purchase a boat; after meeting with incivility from the Master and Senior Tutor and refusals from all the Fellows with the exception of Mr Parish (Treasurer of the Club, and, in October 1838, Fellow) and Robinson it was found that with great exertion the sum of £42 might be raised in the College'. In the event thirty-eight men contributed, on average, a guinea. Incivility from Senior Members is never again recorded, for members of the P.B.C., as in the case of Mr Parish, were assumed gradually into the ranks of the Fellowship and even became Master, so that support of all kinds from above continues to this day to animate the Club. (For the sake of comparison, however, it should be noted that in the late 1820's, at Trinity, the resident fellows contributed money to support the boat club). The boat continued to rise through the ranks. On May 6 1840 R.H. Cobbold was elected Captain. He had been a notable oar at Shrewsbury and rowed twice against Oxford: in 1841 when Cambridge won, and in 1842 when they did not. In 1843 he was President of the CUBC; there was no official boat race that year, but members of the Cambridge Subscription Rooms met an Oxford crew in the final of the Grand Challenge Cup at Henley: they lost. It was under his skilled leadership that the College boat went head in 1842. On March 6 1841 a new boat was ordered to be built 'according to the old system with the planks overlapping one another'. The subscription came to £61 7/-. In this Lent term J.C. Conybeare rowed at 3; he twice won the Chancellor's Prize for an English poem. The boat moved in eleven racing days from eleventh to third, and might have gone further if Caius had not brought in its myrmidons from the London Subscription Rooms. In November of 1841 Caius accepted a general challenge from Peterhouse to race in four-oared boats. Ominously Caius lost by eighty yards. On Monday February 28 1842 they were bumped by Peterhouse who continued Head of the River over the succeeding nine racing days (Lents and Mays not yet being severed). And so after the last race Peterhouse for the only time rowed at the head of Procession, an often disorderly progress of the flower-decked boats up the Backs. The Procession is noticed by Gwen Raverat in 'Period Piece' (p.24). Our account books often mention the claret cup drunk on this occasion, which was abolished in 1892 as disreputable. The racing time of the Head boat this year was 7' 10" over the course; in the following year the Head boat's time was 6' 45" and in 1844 6' 30". The names of the crew were: bow: S. East, 2: J. Best (also a noted Salopian oar), 3: B.H. Puckle, 4: L. Fry, 5: R.H. Cobbold, 6: E.J. Reeve, 7: E.A. White, stroke: J. Beresford, cox: W.G. Blake. Beresford was also President of the CUBC from November 1843 to May 1844. (T.A. Walker asserts wrongly that another Salopian, R. Potter, rowed in this crew; he was Captain of the Club however in 1838.)

1843 - 1849

In March of 1843 it was resolved to buy a new boat, and about £52 were subscribed. It is noticeable from the minutes that despite this high cost which fell directly upon the members, the Club tried to buy a new boat every few years, even annually. The bumping was often ferocious and not uncommonly in histories of this period boats are described as 'written off'. High among the dangers of the river were barges, for the Cam was still a working river and no one expected commercial traffic to cease for the racing (nowadays pleasure cruisers pose a similar hazard). Occasionally one reads of boats going at speed straight into a barge. Steering cannot have been easy, for the boats were heavy and their rudders deep. It is therefore not surprising that the corners were often badly taken and boats not infrequently were driven up a bank. All of the resulting damage would have been difficult, if not impossible, to repair cheaply, and the minutes rarely record more than a few pounds being offered for a boat at its resale. The cost of an eight seems to have been between £50 and £60 with very little variation throughout the century, even taking into account the introduction of outriggers in 1847 and sliding seats in the 70's. It is worth noting that in these early years, when six- and tenoared boats were not irregular, Peterhouse with one exception manned eights. In the course of the century the boats grew sleeker; at the time the PBC was Head however boats were about 52 feet long, between three and five feet broad, and weighed over three and a half hundredweight. The men probably did not sit in a line, but in staggered order down the thwarts - this perhaps helped to increase the 'leverage'.

On the first day of the Lent races in 1843 First Trinity bumped ye Pet, who pursued them unsuccessfully for the rest of the racing season. The make-up of crews was casually altered from race to race, and in the May term one Thomson rowed at 3 and then bow. Later he was to be known as the Right Hon. William, Baron Kelvin of Largs, G.C.V.O., O.M., to that date this University's most eminent man of science since Newton. In 1843 he easily won the Colquhoun sculls over an entry of fourteen; he regularly contributed to the Club's subscription appeals long after his return to Glasgow.

This year the PBC managed to put on a second boat. The getting up and maintenance of another crew was one of the unresolved difficulties in this, as in other small clubs. The Captains were never unaware of the importance to good rowing of a competent second boat, but members generally did not take to the discipline. Second Captains frequently became discouraged, and no official post saw more frequent change of incumbent. One reason for the disenchantment with rowing in a lower boat not already in a division was the curious procedure for getting-on. At first, a casual challenge to the lowest boat was the accepted means of getting-on. So, for example, in Lent 1865 the PBC made its challenge but this was deferred by the CUBC to the following term. No crew can be expected to practise regularly in hopes of securing a place which it cannot improve on. In 1866, a year later, a challenge was duly made against LMBC IV on the last day of the Mays; but that club was bent on keeping its fourth boat on, and altered the crew so that only one man remained of the original eight, the rest being made up of men who happened to be in residence. Our crew lost by three seconds. It is not therefore surprising that second crews rarely appear from Peterhouse until more recent date, when their successes have gratified the whole society.

To return to 1843, second crews were then called 'Cannibals', said to be a slurring of 'canna pulls'. The activities of our second crew, named 'The Pet Balls', were extraordinary enough to merit a full record in the Jesus minute book. The crew went up twelve places in the seven May racing nights, and made two overbumps. But in 1844 they went down on each of the eleven racing nights, and our minutes 'deplore the want of pluck and energy shown by certain members of the Club'. This slide was not arrested in 1845, so the boat was withdrawn.

Rouse Ball reckoned that at the end of Easter term 1845 there had been 257 regular bumping races; in his table of the nine crews that had held the Headship Peterhouse is fifth with thirteen days as Head. By now rowing was the most popular amusement of the first two terms, and only rivalled by cricket in the third.

In October 1845 J. Luxton was Captain; his three sons also returned to Peterhouse and the Boat Club; one of them, Charles, was a Cricket Blue. The secretary this term was S.F. Rippingall, a Cricket Blue, who won the Diamond Challenge Sculls at Henley in 1853. It is characteristic of undergraduate societies that their finances are in disarray. It will not be worth while to list the frequent appeals either for subscriptions (£16/10 were collected this term) or for the payment of dues. The treasurer's position was an unwelcome one, and members could be very slack about debts. The amalgamation of the sports clubs relieved the financial pressure upon the Club to some degree. In a charming note of 1871 accompanying a contribution, A.W. Ward, then at Owens College, Manchester, remarked to the treasurer how little changed was the Club's financial plight since he was himself treasurer in 1856.

On November 22 1845 two proposals were made; first, that four oared races be instituted, and secondly that it would be expedient to have supper after the race. This is the first reference to a dinner to be held in the Michaelmas term; soon it became an annual event, although the term in which it was held differed. The annual supper was the forerunner of the bump supper (which was properly held on the night the bump was made, rather risking the chance of a repeat performance on the following day). The four oar race is the first of the College events in the October term, which by 1890 were six in number: scratch fours, tub pairs, light pairs, scratch pairs, the challenge sculls, whiff races (a type of scull), and the trial eights. (What boats the Club needed for these events were borrowed from other clubs.) This great variety of events prompted the institution about the turn of the century of the Club regatta; all these races were rowed on one day and the later accounts in the minutes make one regret the regatta's passing. This gradual increase in the number and type of College races could only come about in the easy days before the establishment of the Fairbairn Cup race in 1927, the most unpleasant of the 'Varsity calendar. Previously Colleges focussed upon their new recruits more steadily and trained up the freshmen without having an important eight oar race at the end of the term to distract attention from the elements of rowing. In 1846, for example, pewters were presented by members of the PBC to be rowed for in sculls, and in pair oars, as well as the four oared boats. Entrance fees were charged, usually half-a-crown, to cover the cost of hiring posts, pistols, men to fire the pistols, and engraving the pewter tankards. This charge dropped to a shilling in 1899. At the end of the October term of 1845 there were thirty-one members, and they subscribed £60 towards a new boat to be bought from Logan.

A word should be said about this factotum who so long served the PBC. At first all college clubs hired rooms from established boatbuilders. But over the years some of the largest and wealthiest clubs built and kept their own boat houses. The smaller clubs continued to hire their own rooms, and additional boats (an eight and a tub pair

being the minimum) from Cross, Winter, Waites or Searle. The best eight was owned by the Club but stored at a charge of 30/- a term in the boatyard. Sometimes however the best eight was only hired for a couple of terms with reversion to the builder. For two years the PBC was with Searle (1844-6) but his men were slapdash in the way they turned the boat out so the Club transferred its custom to Logan. The relationship was long but not happy. The Captain in 1871 described him as a merciless extortioner. But to do him justice he must have found it hard to recover what was owed him from a society whose financial irregularities have already been touched upon. Besides building boats and hiring rooms he was something of a coach, which weighed in his favour when the Club considered a move to Waites in 1875; more surprisingly he (or perhaps a son) rowed in the College boat; at any rate the account books mention payments to him of half-a-crown for rowing, and the obvious deduction is that, if an oarsman failed to turn up, Logan was ready to fill in. These payments are regrettably frequent, but it may be hoped that the delinquents belonged to the 'unplucky' second boat.

In the Lent term of 1846 it was carried that every man pay for the washing of his own jersey; the washing of towels was later in the century to prove bothersome since no dependable and cheap washerwoman could be found. The Captain, Luxton, presented a flag worked by some ladies of his acquaintance. This is the first of a series of flags worked by ladies. Also this term £10 were voted to Parish for coaching. This compensation and the lack of a title to the surname point, not to the Fellow of that name, but to James Parish, a professional waterman who was the coxswain and coach of the Leander Club for seventeen years. It was just about this time that College clubs began to employ professional coaches from London. In 1845 LMBC hired their first coach, in 1847 Jesus, and 1849 First Trinity. Thus the PBC was one of the first clubs to adopt the practice. In the Lent term of 1850 £13 were subscribed and the coach hired was Robert Coombes, a champion sculler from London much favoured by College clubs. There is a picture of him sculling and of Parish in Lehmann's 'Complete Oarsman'. Coombes has left some hints on rowing in Bateman's 'Aquatic Notes' and an excerpt is worth reproducing as much for its good sense as for its period charm: 'take care when you reach forward to put the oar into the water where you reach to, and not as most gentlemen do, bring the oar back before you put it in, ... it is a very bad thing to go too far back, though some gentlemen seem to think it looks fine rowing'. He also recommends cold baths followed by a rubdown with horsehair gloves; then a mile run with flannel next the skin and a greatcoat or two on. Pastry, rich soups and such like vanities are to be avoided. 'The best made men for rowing are those with good loins, wide at the hips, and long arms ... a good rowing figure should not have more than two inches difference in the measure round loins and round chest.' But the change of times is reflected in his ideal maximum weight: eleven and a half stone. In 1873 the CUBC forbade the use of professional coaches in the fortnight before races; but our present system by then prevailed.

In the May term of 1846 Luxton proposed to remove the second boat from the river because 'many men of the first crew were knocked up, and others (e.g. Luxton himself) went on pulling to the great detriment of their health'. In fact throughout the last century health was most uncertain. A crew nowadays is chosen and remains together with far greater constancy. But then sickness, seediness, exhaustion and doctor's orders were regularly cited in the minutes as the cause of the loss of individuals or the collapse of whole crews. At times crews worked as one only a week before the races.

In 1846 the first, rather narrow railway bridge was thrown over the Cam, and so the racing course was shortened with the finish now 100 yards below the new bridge. In 1871 it was replaced by the present bridge and the course lengthened. In the Michaelmas term there were fourteen new members; since the last Club elections twenty-two men matriculated (in those days men came up at odd times, April being especially favoured). This will be found to be the common form until late in the century when Indian Civil Servants came in great but inconstant numbers. Up to then well over half the new members of the College joined the PBC. An eloquent motion was carried that anyone using obscene language in the boathouse was to be fined 2/6. The four which won the pewter race gave dinner to its five rival crews.

In January 1847 a special collection was made and a 'respectable sum' readily got up to relieve the state of the poor Irish; the potato crop had repeatedly failed. This term Andrew Fairbairn, later knighted, was elected to the club. In later years he generously contributed to the cost of restoring the Hall and Combination Room, as well as to the finances of the PBC. In this term we encounter for the first time a long discussion about the uniform, nor will it be the last time that this important issue is ventilated. Mere desire for change was not, on this occasion at least, at the bottom of the matter: to the unpractised eye, so the objection ran, the colours of Queens' and Sidney could be mistaken for ours. To this it was replied that they had imitated us, and that the colours worn by a Cobbold should not be lightly altered. Rightly this sense prevailed. The boat itself was particoloured blue, black and deal, with its bow painted with arms and badges. The hat had a broad blue ribbon and blue ribbon was also used as a binding on the jersey. A select committee strongly disapproved of the design 'of the blue stripe on the flannel trousers, being totally unsuited for the uniform of a crew'. This niceness was overcome in the 70's, but later the stripe was narrowed and at last disappeared. The meeting closed with the Captain's requesting the crew to train and abstain from all excesses. This Lent and Mays the crews rowed in a hired outrigger. In the October term of 1847 ten new members in all were elected, one of whom, J.W. Taylor, became a Fellow. James Porter was made an honorary member, but soon rowed. His elder brother was already a member, and later became a Fellow. Porter Jr. went on to be Master of Peterhouse (1876-1900) and a well-liked Cambridge figure who was often seen carrying his little dog Rollo, also a member of the CUCC, to Fenners to watch the cricket. In his Mastership he was a staunch supporter of the Club and subscribed to it generously.

In the October term of 1848 there was an unusually large number of College races: pewter races for pairs, a pewter for sculls, and a silver cup for sculls. In each event East, who rowed in the Head boat of 1842, won; he was still in residence and active membership. He coached the fours which raced from the Railway Bridge to Plough Reach. For the races of Lent and May a boat was to be built by Logan and hired for £30; the crew went up five places. Each member of the Club subscribed 'according to custom' a half-crown to the University crew at Henley. One Shafto donated £5 to the PBC 'in consequence of the Flying Dutchman'; was this a Newmarket flutter?

In the October term of 1849 nine new members were elected. The names of two of them, W.D. Gardiner and W. Smith, can be read to this day where they carved them in the wooden window ledge on the east wall of what is now the Ward Library. Gardiner became an officer of the Club, then a Fellow and Judge.

1850 - 1864

In October of 1850 six new members were elected, among them E.J. Routh. He was Senior Wrangler in 1854 and during his time as a Fellow the most successful mathematical coach of his day; a replica of the Herkomer portrait hangs in the Hall. Apart from some motions concerning dress the year passed without incident. In the October term of 1851 the Club joined with Sidney to enter a crew in the 'Varsity four oared race, which had been founded in 1849. This amalgamated four reached the final against Third Trinity. The race was marred by a dispute: our combined crew went down to its station first, and on the way the coxswain noticed a bank of weeds at Grassy which he told the men he would have to steer round in the race. Trinity followed down; their cox also saw the weed but, more practically, ordered it to be removed. But with lack of moral delicacy he omitted to tell his rival that the course was now cleared. Trinity therefore steered close while the combined crew went wide; since they were only a second and a half behind at the finish this incident was felt to be of material difference to the result. But the CUBC did not act upon the protest.

In the Lent term of 1852 P.G. Tait was admitted as an honorary member; his name is also carved with Gardiner's and Smith's. After a brilliant mathematical career he became professor of natural philosophy at Edinburgh. His son came up in 1880 and joined the PBC, and was a Rugby Blue. To the boat subscription for this term the Fellows contributed over £41; the Master, Dr Cookson, modestly called 'a Friend', gave £5, as did G. Druce, in whose honour the Hall's oriel window was glazed. In the May term a pair from the Club lost by only a few strokes to a Sidney pair in the final of the Magdalene Silver Challenge oars, a race instituted in 1844. A deputy captain was appointed for the long vacation.

In the October term of 1852 the flag could not be found. It transpired that one Cory had borrowed it to wave at the Chairing of the Member for the borough. It was thereupon resolved that the flag, now after eight years in a sorry state, should not be waved at any political or other procession connected with the Town. (The flag was of course carried in the boat at the Procession, but for a time it was the custom to display it when rowing to one's station before a bumping race.) Pewters were again offered by members for the usual scull and pair races. But this year it was proposed that since Midsummer Common was flooded the races be held neck and neck, rather than as bumps, over it. To Gardiner's objection that it would be a bad precedent, a former Captain, Baker, sensibly replied 'We cannot row on Midsummer Common if we cannot', so the pairs raced over the Common from its East end to a point just above Logan's boathouse (near the present Christ's boathouse, long before the Victoria Bridge was built).

Little of note except for the presentation of a new flag in April 1853 occurred thereafter. An account of the last race in the Mays for 1854 is worth quoting. 'Two of the crew having indulged in a champagne breakfast were declared to be in an unfit state to pull. It was then agreed to take the chances of a six oared boat and one having been procured at Cross's the gallant crew started in famous spirits, thanks to the worthy coxswain who volunteered his services for the occasion. This gentleman, addicted to the sports of the field rather than those of the water, caused no little amusement by the application of military terms to those under his command, such as "Forward" for "Paddle on all" - "Double-quick" for "Lift her up" etc. etc. The Peterhouse six succeeded in pulling away from the Clare Hall eight which was by no

means a despicable boat.' Despite repeated efforts the Clare boat could not make their bump on us, and at the conclusion of the race that crew joined the 'bankers' in applauding Peterhouse's 'unprecedented exploit'.

To give a notion of what was deemed sufficient practice it is worth recording that in the Lent term of 1854 it was proposed that the crew be bound to go down to the river at least twice a week. But in Lent 1855 the Captain, Begbie, insisted that his men go down to the river daily; the races that term seem to have been cancelled. A new boat was thought to be necessary because in the last races six bricks had had to be carried for ballast. It was proposed to revise the rules and a copy of them is pasted down in the minute book; as headgear a black straw hat with blue band was adopted, and on the oars cross keys were painted.

Among the six new members elected in the October term of 1855 was A.W. Ward, who in time succeeded Dr Porter as Master. He became a distinguished literary historian and man of letters as the large library which he bequeathed to the College attests; he was President of the British Academy. As an undergraduate he rowed regularly and was, as already mentioned, treasurer. His notes as secretary in 1857 give full and amusing accounts of each day's racing. In October of 1857 he was Captain. This term (1855) the boat supper was held with brilliant success, and forty-three men, some doubtless guests of members, attended.

In 1856 the CUBC determined that only the second division should race in the Lents, so that the best college oars could feel free to row for the University. This meant that good second division crews had fewer opportunities of getting into the first division. But in 1857 it was resolved that boats below those supplying men to the 'Varsity crew would race in the Lents. Furthermore in the May races the first division was to race on more days than the second. In the May term the College canoe races, which were bumps, were held; the date of their institution is uncertain, and their vogue was brief. In the October term of 1856 H.M. Birdwood, the first of his line in the College, proposed a new form of cap but failed to sway the Club. There is a full account of this year's champagne supper to which members of the University Boat and Cricket Clubs were invited. The dinner was taken in Hall and a band was in attendance. 'Excellent songs were sung by the gentlemen present'; songs are often mentioned as a condiment of these dinners and one regrets the self-consciousness, dating from the Great War, which keeps men from this amusement; T.R. Glover, for example, wrote a clever song for the LMBC in 'mediaeval' Latin. The festivities continued into the following morning, but the Master and Fellows expressed themselves as gratified by the right use made of their concession. In the May term of 1857 a new tub eight was built for £50, and a tub for coaching as well; over £100 was subscribed by the Master, Fellows and members.

The minutes hereafter become sketchy. In the Easter term of 1858 Charley was hired as a trainer for half-a-crown; in 1860 he was still with us, though by one member reckoned 'no good'. In the October term of 1858 fifty men attended the dinner, but champagne was not served. The old boat was sold to Queens' for £7, which shows the extent of depreciation. In the Lents of 1859 it seems that the crew first used round-handled oars. Another recent innovation (c.1857) had wide effects: keelless boats were coming into use. They cut down the time over the course by up to half a minute but imposed special practice requirements if they were to be balanced efficiently. As Rouse Ball says, the rowing of the best men became hereafter a more specialised amusement and the highest development of the art was confined to the wholly dedicated.

In March 1859 Blood, Clarke, W. Edwards and Melville presented to the PBC the Silver Challenge Sculls which Blood was the first to win. In the May term 7/6 was levied on each man who had rowed in the last races to support the University crew at Henley.

In the October term of 1859 eight new members were elected; only nine men had matriculated since the last elections and the number of resident junior members was only about thirty-five. The College was generally on the small side, though King's, Sidney and Queens' were smaller. In 1842 for example there were thirty-nine men in residence. No evidence has been forthcoming to substantiate the story which Walker, with plain diffidence, related on page 106 of his history of the College; there is a story of that same tendency applied to Sidney. The Club contributed to the CUBC's appeal fund to buy a lifeboat for the National Lifeboat Society at the 'trifling expense' of £180. Floods stopped the May races on two nights and we were thirteenth in Procession.

In October 1860 among the new members was T.W. Dunn, whose name is not unknown to classical Petreans; there is a short life written of him. At the first meeting of the term it was proposed to increase the opportunities open to freshmen to row, but no plan was devised. Numbers must have had something to do with this. In the Lent term of 1861 a coach was again hired, Tom Grant. The crew were urged not to drink too much beer during the time of their coaching and to train 'somewhat': in the Captain's eyes abstinence from puddings and smoking was desirable. In the May term a subscription for a new outrigger was opened and over £66 promised. This term the sculling races were held, 'one man sustaining the habits of the College by upsetting at the start'.

In the October term of 1861 fifteen new members were elected, and the College entrance was nineteen. One was A.G. Payne who from 1862-5 played billiards against Oxford; in later life he is said to have edited Cassell's 'Dictionary of Cookery' thanks to interests fostered at Peterhouse. His keenness for billiards was not applauded by the whole Club; the objections were not of course ethical, but rather that he gave no time to rowing. It was felt that the distinction between pulling and non-pulling members should be maintained, but that those who said they would pull must do so. Some men proposed to go in for the University scratch fours, and, when it was suggested that they train, the matter was left to individual discretion. In the Lent term of 1862, a third division having been formed that raced downstream, a second boat was got up which bumped on every night.

But in the October term of 1862 the Captain was complaining that other small colleges - Jesus, Pembroke and Queens' - daily sent down two eights and that Peterhouse men must show more interest in rowing. Spirit was clearly low at the time; an index is the annual supper, abandoned for lack of support. And yet one member, Blake, was in the 'Varsity Trial Eight; in the accounts of the next year's races he is faulted for devoting his attention to the University; he was in fact ready to coach, but unwilling to row.

Trial eights, which First Trinity started in 1859, seem to be introduced in October 1863 - the minutes are sketchy. The boat supper, which had not been held for two years 'owing to a growing love of tea', was revived and guests from three University societies, the Boat Club, the Cricket Club, and the Volunteer Rifles, were invited. In the Lent term of 1864 the Captain informed the Club that they could get the blue and white stockings to be worn with knickerbockers at Warwick's of Trinity Street, and he reassured the coxswain that knickerbockers would form no part of his uniform. An account of a race is worth reproducing from the minutes. It is the last day of the Mays

of 1864 and the second boat are making one of their rare appearances; 'The Peterhouse 2nd Boat determined to do something or die. Before them was Lady Margaret V, half full of Old Varsity Oars. Behind was Pembroke II, universally acknowledged to be the best boat in the division. But the undying energies of this immortal crew - notwithstanding the shouts and groans of bow that he could not possibly exist beyond the Plough, and the ghastly appearances of others of the crew, while being overlapped by Pembroke at Grassy, succeeded in running into LMV in the Gut to the imminent peril of Bow. The spurt which the plucky Stroke put on round Grassy was only equalled by the brilliant steering - each being prodigious in their professions.'

This amusing account however was written at a time when the internal disharmony of the Club had reached such a distressing level that the boat stayed tied up at the start of some race days and the CUBC requested that the crew not enter the Procession. The second boat, coached by the recalcitrant Blake, acquitted itself well.

In the October term of 1864 thirteen members joined, of whom T.G. Little later won an Athletics Blue. At this time the boat club, as the established society for sportsmen, gave shelter to a variety of interests, and probably looked upon athletics and other land sports as part of training. But gradually their attractions increased and rowing begins to lose some of its following. The great flowering of English sports is at hand, and rowing becomes simply one of many pastimes. Soon we shall begin to read of (and deplore) the rise of soccer, which interfered with outings even at Jesus. In a small college the result is predictable: a few men do not go very far and often one man dabbles in several sports. The traditional charm of rowing yielded place to more recent attractions and the CUBC and CUCC, as the founts of all patronage, were beset with demands that Blues be awarded for just about everything. In the May term of 1865 the crew was coached by an old member who was then a Fellow, Richmond.

1865 – 1879

In October 1865 there were eleven new members of whom R. Waltham won his Blue for putting the weight. Another, J.G. Barnes, later Lord Gorell, was President of the Probate, Divorce and Admiralty Division of the High Court. The Club was £100 in debt but a subscription was deferred. It was proposed, but not carried, to row the scratch fours in academics. In the Lent term of 1866 college trial eights certainly rowed and they were to become regular. (This year Cambridge seriously considered not challenging Oxford; the Cantabs had lost a run of races and were to go on losing until 1870 when Goldie restored honour. Rouse Ball attributed these steady defeats to a defective training theory that sought to minimise the time spent in coming forward by a too-quick body swing.) For the first time the weights of a crew are given, for the May term. The heaviest man was 13st. 9lbs. and the lightest 10st., the average being 11st. 9lbs. without the coxswain. It was proposed this term to send a boat to the Lynn regatta, the first such suggestion in the minutes. The expense would have been about 5/- per member but the proposal was apparently not acted upon. The Captain rightly felt that competition in foreign waters would be good for the morale, but as in other matters a captain's judgment was not backed up generally. So too in October Emmanuel proposed that small clubs amalgamate to send a crew to Henley but the PBC did not participate, if, that is, there was any response at all to the motion; W.E. Heitland accounts for the failure of a similar scheme in 'After Many Years' (p.111). In the Lent term of 1867 there were only sixteen rowing men in the College. This is not to say that Club membership was necessarily low, but not all members, it must be recalled, were oarsmen. Furthermore the old examination schedule was less compact than it now is, so men would often go out of residence to read if they were to be examined in the Lent term. Notwithstanding, a second boat was gamely put together, but it failed to secure a place in the unsuitable getting-on method already described. It was proposed that the crew of the first boat always take breakfast and supper together in the same room and share the expense (the Hall was at that time used only for dinner in the late afternoon, but that meal crept during the century into the evening hours); this proposal was agreed to but not apparently acted on. The minutes of the October term of 1867 tell us something of the value of prizes. That for the challenge sculls was 16/6, and each man in the winning scratch four received 19/-; entrants paid a small fee towards this. In October 1868 one of the twelve new members, T.C. Fox (Captain 1871-72), later played cricket for Hampshire. Six crews entered the scratch fours, a respectable turn-out. In 1868 the Cam, which was much silted up, was dredged by the CUBC to a depth of five feet at a cost of £1000 a mile. There was also a proposal made in October 1869 to rectify what Sir Shane Leslie called the hell of rowers and paradise of coxes, i.e. to cut through Grassy and Ditton corners and so straighten the bumping course. This year (1868) the rules were revised - a copy is in the minutes - and there were elaborate dress regulations. The winning trial eight, whose coach's horse cost £3/10 to hire, rowed the full course in Lent 1869 from Bait's Bite to the Railway Bridge in 8'51". In the Lent term of 1870 the Captain again stressed the general importance of maintaining a second crew; his appeal was answered, but the boat which got on made no bump. In the light of the 'exhorbitance' of College cooks and butlers it was resolved to side-step heavy training expenses and adopt the Oxford plan whereby members of the Club as a whole would take it in turns to breakfast the crew. Since there were fifty-six members of the PBC the response was good. On March 8 it was proposed to build a shower bath in the club room at Logan's. By early May the new

shower was erected in such a way that 'should Logan prove further disagreeable it cannot be claimed as a fixture'. But on May 16 Logan's yard men were each given half-a-crown - the shower had in some way broken and caused much inconvenience. The Captain, Amphlett, with a due sense of the past, proposed that the Club buy up any portions of the ship and oars that had rowed Head twenty-eight years before. These 'sweet remains' are now in the Sexcentenary Club room. The Captain also proposed that the second crew be awarded its oars for the previous term's success; the motion was lost for no other reason than that their oars were new and indispensable, while the old ones at Logan's were not the ones they had rowed with and so no true memorial. A new flag, made from stuff given by the Club to the Misses Budd of 'The Limes', Hitchin, was unfurled. The doubtless gratified ladies were sent a photograph of the crew. That May success was mixed; on the fifth night a strong wind blew the rope, which the cox had flung away at the start, into the rudder where it fouled and held the boat. The term's final meeting was exercised by the problem of how to keep the Young Christian Men out of our boat room during the Long.

In the October term of 1870 there were ten new members; J.B. Pryor was a Virginian, the son of a Confederate General. It was proposed that canvas pair oar races be instituted but the Captain urged that this would be detrimental to eight oar racing and so the motion was lost. In the Lent term of 1871 Chr. Wordsworth of Trinity, who had been elected to a Peterhouse Fellowship, was made an honorary member of the Club; this he took seriously and contributed to subscriptions. In the May term an appeal was made to old members to help bail the Club out of its financial difficulties.

In the October term of 1871 there were thirty-seven members of the PBC. Among the thirteen new members were G. Chrystal, later bracketed second Wrangler and second Smith's prizeman, and Professor of mathematics at Edinburgh and St Andrews; A. Lloyd, a student of Japan and translator; and R. Solomon, High Commissioner for the Union of South Africa: there are commemorative brasses to the last two in the South wall of the sanctuary of the Chapel. This term an agreement was signed by Logan: for forty guineas he should supply the Club with a new eight annually, boat housing, dressing room and attendance; a boat would be returned to him every two years; water, repairs and damages were not included. This does not seem dear if compared to earlier costs, but the Club failed to be satisfied. In the Lent term of 1872 only twenty-five members were in residence. The crew was light and the headwind high: hence the loss of place. It was proposed that a dinner be held in London to tempt old members back into residence for the May term; but the motion was not acted upon. Men declined rowing for reading. The Captain felt reading to be an individual matter, and cited as example one member who could not read after drinking a quart of beer at supper. Training was to be as follows: breakfast at 8 in the rooms of a crew member, early Hall, and then supper, which would be over by 8.30. Still it proved difficult to get men who had undertaken to row to act upon the promise. Some literary member pasted verses upon the wall of the Sexcentenary Club room, and damaged the wallpaper; that junior society was upset and needed calming.

In the October term of 1872 a resolution was passed in favour of introducing sliding seats into the second division. The slide was an innovation the value of which was debated, if not denied outright. Lehmann devotes twenty pages to the stroke made with its use in his 'Complete Oarsman', and anyone who has coached, however briefly, would agree that the proper integration of the slide is the most difficult part of the mystery of rowing for a crew to master. Slides were used in the Boat Race of 1873 and no-one thereafter considered abandoning them. But, like the keelless boat, the sliding seat tended to specialise rowing further and make it less accessible to casual

oarsmen. The Club's rules were revised this term and it was resolved that the badge should read 'Peterhouse', not 'St. Peter's College'. The training and practice of the Lent term have a modern ring: the full course was rowed four times, with frequent fast rows to the Plough; once they rowed to Clayhythe. On February 24 'porridge was instituted as a wholesome addition to the breakfasts'; it was urged that liquor be taken moderately.

In the October term of 1873 the sculls race was regularised; the course was fixed with the bottom station above Ditton Corner and the finish at Morley's Holt. Athletics is ever more frequently mentioned, and Whalley, a member of the PBC, was President of the College Athletics Club. Trial eights were scrapped, and caps became an obsession; should they be striped, banded, or trimmed in white? In 1874 it was resolved by the CUBC (the PBC opposed) that there should be an upper finishing post near the Horse Grind for the first seven boats in a division, and for the rest a lower post about one hundred yards above the Railway Bridge at the Osier Beds. In the Lent term many members of the crew are said to be seedy, and they were not able to practise as a crew until a week before the bumps.

In the Michaelmas term of 1874 there were nine new members elected, trial eights were reorganized, and the cap's design was altered. That settled, the jersey was reconsidered - should it be striped or trimmed? The majority reckoned the trimmed version pretty, so there was no change. The Lents and Mays of 1875 were dismal: the Mays were not open to the third division so Peterhouse did not row, and could give all its attention to dress.

In October of 1875 among the eight new members was William Stone, later, much later, a Benefactor. This term there were twenty-six members in the Club at a time when only thirty seven men were resident in College. It is therefore not surprising that getting up crews proved a problem. In the Lent term of 1876 the CUBC resolved that all colleges would be represented in the Mays and that sliding seats would be used in the second division. In the Lent races three boats were moved to a higher division, so lower crews filled up their places; hence the jump on the chart. It was resolved that the first boat blazer be single breasted with the cross keys on the left breast.

In the Michaelmas term of 1876 James Porter, who as a Fellow had rowed with a crew called 'The Ancient Mariners', was elected Master. Among the twelve new members of the PBC was H.G. Fuller; he was a Rugby Blue, later Captain and President of the CURFC, and an England International. In May 1881 he was officially thanked by the Club for rowing forty-five times in the first boat. The North wall of the sanctuary of the Chapel bears a brass in his honour. By his election in the Lent term of 1877 the Club may claim among its distinguished members William Ridgeway, a noted student of Greek archaeology. He was briefly acting secretary in the following year, but migrated to Caius in hopes of a Fellowship. Again the order of Lent boats was amended and we went up two places. The dearth of undergraduate oarsmen is demonstrated by the presence in the May crew of two clergymen: A. Lloyd, curate of Great St. Mary's, was at 6 and the cox was G.F.Sams who had come up in 1863 and was the College Chaplain.

In the Michaelmas term of 1877 another new cap appears, this time bearing the College arms in silver. In the Lent term 1878 the first boat's jacket is described as a single-breasted cutaway with white ribbon trim with the cross keys on the breast; other crews had flannel trim and a square cut jacket. The blue stripe disappears from the trousers. In the May term W.E. Barnes was elected a member. At just under eight stone he was a born cox; later he was a Fellow and Hulsean Professor of Divinity. Fen

Court was built thanks to his generosity. An eight costing £50 and a four costing £40 were ordered from Logan. The colours of the cap badge were altered to red and gold. In the Lent term of 1879 revised rules were printed and a copy is pasted down in the minute book. A great effort was made to put together a second eight; the first difficulty was not, for once, finding oarsmen, but securing coaches. When a tradition of skilful rowing in a college is broken, as by now it clearly was in Peterhouse, then the Club must turn outside to relearn the art. Professional coaching was by now no longer used, and the stronger clubs were in duty bound to assist the weaker if only for the sake of Cambridge rowing as a whole. A gifted oarsman can turn up anywhere, and in less than twenty years Peterhouse gave the 'Varsity one of its most successful oars. Still, finding good coaching was, and is, difficult. This term six other boats were vying for a place and our second crew lost to the one which in the event got it. In the Michaelmas term of 1879 there were seventeen new members and this allowed the trial eights to be revived after a lacuna. The winning crew's time was 7'30" from the third station to the Railway Bridge. The cap is again an issue: should the arms be in silver or in the heraldic colours, if indeed there should be arms at all? should there be a mitre over the arms? should the cap have just a white stripe? In the Lent term of 1880 seven more members joined but a second crew again failed to get on. In May they challenged Pembroke II for their place at the bottom of the second division; this was vindicated, and the first boat in effect rose four places. General support from the non-pulling members of the Club was good. Beaumont of Downing coached. A bridge-to-bridge (i.e., from the little bridge above Bait's Bite to the Railway Bridge) time of 8'39" is recorded and reckoned good.

1880-1914

In the Michaelmas term of 1880 there were two new members elected who distinguished themselves in 'Varsity sports: J.G. Tait, the Club's Secretary in October 1882, was a Rugby Blue (his father, Professor Tait, was a member in 1852); and F.H. Rawlins became President of the University Swimming Club. Light ships were not being rowed thanks to a CUBC ruling. Trial eights were cancelled because many men had gone out of residence to avoid sickness. In the Michaelmas term of 1881 the prize for the College Sculls was a pair of two guinea sculls to be kept, and the silver challenge sculls for a year. In the May term of 1882 the Captain, Sample, was awarded his oar, and the coxswain his rudder, in memory of the crew's three bumps. In the Michaelmas term of that year Sample's younger brother, later a Rugby Blue, became a member along with our College's historian, T.A. Walker. The Lents of 1883 were enlivened by the sudden departure of Fuller after the second night: he was summoned to play against Scotland. The fact that there were six scratch fours got up this term is evidence of a revived interest in rowing. The 'Mays' of 1883 were the first to be held in June, so as not to be interfered with by the examinations. The crew began to move up through the ranks once again, and the Captain attributed their success to beer. Fuller returned to his oar three days before the races. The numerous changes in men right up to the races generally throughout the colleges argue only a vague sense that the crew should work as a unit.

There were twelve new members elected in Michaelmas 1883; one was E.C. Marchant of Christ's Hospital, later a noted student of Thucydides and sub-Rector of Lincoln College, Oxford. He coxed a trial eight. In the Lent term of 1884 the minutes record the first bump supper so called. After dinner in Hall the forty revellers strayed into Old Court, where the Dean is said to have joined them for an hour; one man reduced the wooden scaffolding then encompassing the Chapel to a ruinous state. After the Mays four men in the first boat were awarded their oars for two bumps and two row-overs: in three years the boat had climbed to the top of the second division from the bottom. One night they recorded a start of 40 strokes a minute. In October of 1884 the Amalgamated Athletic Club was founded, and henceforth it becomes hard to know who was elected a member and to judge of the membership. The sum collected to clear the Boat Club's debt was £92/15. This term there were fourteen new members and in 1885 nineteen. In October 1886 it was resolved by the CUBC at the suggestion of its President, F.I. Pitman, that the continuity between the Lents and Mays be broken and that the terms' races now be independent of one another. Up to this time there had been three divisions. The first rowed only in the Mays, and the third only in the Lents. Thus only the second division rowed in both the Lents and the Mays. The consequence of this was that some small clubs never rowed in the Mays. Henceforth there were to be two new divisions in both terms, 31 boats in the Lents and 30 in the Mays. The Lent boats were to be clinker-built with fixed seats. All May boats were to have slides; the first division of the Mays rowed in light craft, the second in tubs. Furthermore the racing was fixed at four days in each term. In the clubs the effect of this adjustment was to make the May boat the more important, and it alone was called the first boat. In the PBC it was proposed that there should be three captains; one for the first boat, one for the Lent boat, and one for any other crews. W.L. Plaskitt was presented with his oar after six years of service to the Club. In the Michaelmas term of 1887 one of the new members was F.C. Bree-Frink, a Rugby Blue (at the moment his grand-daughter, Elisabeth Frink, is modelling a bust of the Master to be cast in bronze). The College, it is clear, produced a number of

footballers in these years, and this may account for the less than memorable rowing. The Lent races of 1888 were cut short by a fatal accident. Clare bumped Queens' and pulled into the far bank just beyond the First Post Corner. Trinity Hall III made a poor corner and ran across the river; the steel prow struck the Clare 4 man, E.S. Campbell, above the heart; his death was instant. Rubber knobs were thereafter placed over the point. (The incident is turned to graphic profit in Alan St. Aubyn's novel 'A Fellow of Trinity'.) In the May term the question arose as to the shade of blue to be worn; it seems to have lightened over the years and some wanted a reversion to the old dark blue. This issue-surfaces again in the October term of 1889 and 1890. But alteration was voted down, and our present royal blue seems to have been accidentally arrived at. (In the bumps chart of 1846 however the blue used to track the path of the Peterhouse boat is far from dark, nor yet a sky blue.)

In the Michaelmas term of 1890 the scratch pairs drew twenty-four entrants; which indicates a healthy number of oarsmen. In the Mays of 1891 sickness beset the Club, and it is cited also in 1893,'94,'95,1901,'03 as a cause of decline: this is not malingering, for Jesus reckon their fall at one point as due to the sickness of the Fairbairn brothers. In the Michaelmas term of 1891 one of the new members was R. Hamblin Smith, a Lawn Tennis Blue. The Mays of 1892 were remarkable for a thunderstorm on the first evening in which a man was killed on the towpath. (This storm was also laid under contribution in the novel just mentioned, as well as in E.F. Benson's 'David of King's'.) Our minutes give it full account. In October 1893 one of the new members, R.B. Redwood, became a Cycling Blue, as did F.W. Chisman, who matriculated in 1895. This was the high summer of English Athleticism, and the light Blue was the peak of undergraduate ambition. The College boasted a fair number of Blues in such sports as fencing and lawn tennis, but no longer were the men members of the P.B.C. - 'non ragioniam di lor'. By now the other sports were emancipated from the Boat Club's guardianship, and the variety of amusements took men off the water. Thus in October 1894 a minute complains that the practice of the trial eights was disturbed by football engagements. Yet even at Jesus, where aquatic glory was a fresh memory, there was only one rowing Blue among eighteen others. In the Lent term of 1895 the river was frozen for a long time, so practice must have been impossible. But with the thaw came an influenza epidemic, and it was that which prompted the CUBC to postpone the races to the next year. In the Mays the PBC pulled itself together and took to rigorous practice. They had a new fast boat, costing £50 with its oars, and rowed five 'Clayhythes', i.e., they carried the boat around Bait's Bite lock and rowed on to the 'Bridge Hotel' at Clayhythe. A ditch-time is recorded; 1'27". The result was gratifying: three bumps and one row over. The Club gave a dance on the Tuesday night which lasted to past five in the next morning, and held its bump supper on the Wednesday.

The time was ripe for revival and in the October term of 1895 the Club found a leading oar in J.E. Payne, whose younger brother, E.R., came up a couple of years later. The elder Payne rowed in the winning Blue Boats of 1899 and 1900; in that year he was Honorary Secretary of the CUBC. In 1901 he rowed for the Grand in the winning Leander crew; the race figures in Lehmann's 'Complete Oarsman', Payne being singled out. In his account of this term's trial eights the secretary notes how few crabs were caught; from a cursory reading of the minutes one has an impression that crabs were very common even in the better boats. In the Lent term of 1896 the crew practised with a new-found regularity and rowed full courses after going to Clayhythe. The crew won their oars; six of them as well as the cox were freshmen. In the May term a boat flag was presented by Mrs J.D.H. Dickson, whose husband, now a Fellow,

had been a member of the PBC some twenty-five years before; a photograph was taken of the ladies, who were elected honorary members for their generosity, along with some oarsmen on the lawn of the Fellows' Garden.

In the October term of 1896 the Club entered the 'Varsity Clinker Fours. Coached by R.B. Etherington-Smith, a noted oar and writer of the article on training in the 'Complete Oarsman', the PBC won. There is a full account of the racing in the first issue of the Sexcentenary Club's magazine, 'The Sex', for Lent 1897. The journal was regularly published up to the mid-1950's, and its rowing correspondent is often fuller in his accounts of racing and of personalities than the minute books. One learns from 'The Sex' that it was an immemorial custom for the cox to waken crew members when in training; all then went for a walk and sprint before breakfast to the first mile post down the Trumpington Road. This term a dark blue scarf was added to the uniform officially. In the College only twelve men matriculated, and one of those few who joined the PBC was R.H. Thornton, a Water Polo Blue. Payne won his trial cap. And it was proposed to build a boat house. This matter was pursued in the Lent term of 1897; the cost of the freehold of the land was reckoned at £280, and of the building to be erected £600 (by comparison Pembroke had spent £1800). In the Michaelmas term of 1897 G. du Vallon, a Boxing Blue, and Captain of the PBC in the next year, was elected a member. In the Lent term of 1898 the bump on the final night was made on 3's rigger, of the upper boat! Four bumps followed in the Mays. In the Lent term of 1899 the Club resolved to hire boats for its casual races rather than leave the competitors to hire their own. Peterhouse again won the Clinker fours and the Master (Dr Porter) sent over half-a-dozen of his champagne ('excellent') to help the celebrations in a special Guest Hall. A racing start of 46 was recorded. In the Lent term of 1900 the Clinker Fours were still the PBC's province, and on this occasion a bump supper was held in Hall. The Mays were crowned with success. Both Paynes were in the boat, which went up five places, each a bump, to return after thirty-three years to the first division. On the first night the Emmanuel II cox was so rattled that he drove his boat up the bank and sank her. (Another defensive tactic of the coxswain's art, now lost in upper divisions, was washing off a bump by wagging the rudder rapidly to wave off the attacking prow but not alter his own boat's course.) It is noteworthy that the supper does not seem to have been held. In the Lent term of 1902 the crew went to Hunstanton on the coast the weekend before the races; this jaunt became something of an intermittent tradition over the next few years; it is last mentioned before the Mays of 1933. In the Mays of 1902 we had a new boat, 56 feet long and 2'4" at her broadest; she rose to tenth in the first division, a position she was not to maintain.

Henceforth Fortune frowns. Sickness and the 'war of coaches' show their effect on crews. Also there seems to have been one of those periodic disenchantments with rowing (which follow often on a period of success; such was the case in Trinity Hall and Jesus). Captains were finding it difficult to get crews together at all. Large colleges with solid traditions of rowing weather these doldrums and their crews lurk in the middle or lower reaches of the first division awaiting a renaissance. But a small club's fall will be as rapid as its rise.

In the trial eights of the Michaelmas term for 1902 there rowed A.F. Jackson. A memorial brass in the chapel commemorates his work as a missionary in China, which even the Emperor acknowledged with a large gift towards the foundation of a hospital in his memory. Jackson also rowed in the Lent and May Boats of 1903. In the Michaelmas term of this year one of the trial boats was almost wholly manned by soccer players. One coxswain, Rose-Innes, was later a Hockey Blue. On the fashion

front, linen hats with blue bands were being worn. In the Michaelmas term of 1905 J.M. Drysdale of Shrewsbury School joined the PBC; in October 1908 he was Captain and our best scull perpetuates his name. In 1957 he gave £400 to the recently established Boat Club Trust Fund. The rules were revised and dress regulations are both complex and dazzling. Mr Mario Cortegiano wrote to the Master, Dr Ward, offering to teach the crew the Venetian style of rowing; an opportunity scorned. In the Lent term of 1906 'The Sex' gives an account of the College Regatta, previously mentioned; it seems to have been disorderly and amusing. On the first day of this term's bumps a member of the third Jesus boat died in an accident unconnected with the river; his club did not row that day, and so our first boat did not claim its bump when it rowed past the starting place of a boat now regarded as a traditional 'enemy', Jesus II.

The next couple of years do not offer matter worthy of record, and even the minutes are scrappy. The pattern of trial eights and a regatta at either end of the academic year continues. In the Lent term of 1910 the first eight were awarded the blades, not the whole oar, since a total of four bumps was reckoned as now essential for that honour; so blades alone were also awarded to the first May crew for three bumps. In the Michaelmas term of 1910 P.C. Vellacott, later Tutor (1920-34) and then Master (1939-54), rowed in a trial eight; when a Fellow, he always favoured the Club's interest, and when he was Master, he started what is now the custom of giving Club members breakfast on the first morning of the May races: this is first recorded in the 1954 minutes. In that year he was elected president of the PBC, an honour that is not the Master's *ex officio*. In the Lent term of 1911 an emblazoned oar was presented to the Sex Club to perpetuate the successes of the 1910 first boat.

From the May term of 1911 up to the Great War there is frequent reference to the difficulty of getting a crew together. So in the May term of 1912 the senior scholar was asked to hold a full college meeting and to encourage men to put themselves forward. Two reasons can be offered to explain this lack of interest: first, athletics fixtures conflicted with practice times, and secondly, slack discipline proved demoralising. As to the first point, Vellacott urged that the claims of the boat were superior to those of any other sport. It is recorded that in the Michaelmas term of 1912 there were three flags, and that the minute books were to be deposited in the library (whither the account books followed them in March 1914).

1919-1939

The Great War put a stop to all the undergraduate life of Cambridge. On February 2 1919 a general meeting of the Amalgamation Club set about reorganizing college sports. There were twelve members only in the boat club, and a crew, made up of Naval officers, rowed in that term's special fixed-seat races, which were conducted in groups on the American tournament system. In the May term of 1919 it was proposed to re-introduce the old (?) custom of 'port nights', but the Captain reckoned this would not improve the crew's fitness.

In the Michaelmas term of 1919 W. Herten (later Herten-Greaven) was secretary and then in the May term of 1920 Captain; after his death in 1931 his father gave £1000 in his memory, which was set aside so that the interest could be used to help in defraying the cost of sending crews to Henley. It was in 1920 that the present first boat's badge - the mitre over crossed keys in silver thread - was officially adopted in place of a broad white ribbon (worn on the pocket?). To finish with dress, in the May term of 1921 it is said that progress is being made on the matter of a tie: a plain blue was the colour for the Club as a whole, but the first May tie - royal blue with a repeated diagonal group of three thin silver stripes, the middle one thinner than those on either side - is only described in 1931; probably it was approved some ten years earlier. (It is very like the tie of 1st (and 3rd) Trinity, but since club ties became the fashion at about the same time it would not be easy to say which is original.)

We now begin to notice a most favourable turn in the Club's fortunes. It was largely founded upon the fact that a lot of Petreans took to the oar. It is always the case that when a large number of men are engaged in the same enterprise, good spirits are generated, and there is none of that depression which settles on a club that is unable to fill its boats. There have been times (for example, the Lents of 1961) when Club membership was low, but spirit and success were still maintained. But the price is always to pay when there is a dearth of experienced oarsmen and much of the 1960's is bleak just because too few rowed. The reason for that will be given in its proper place. To return to Michaelmas of 1923, twenty-five men presented themselves for training and the secretary was no false seer when he predicted a fair future: from 1925 on, the bumping record of the first eight was prodigious, and the characteristic harbinger of this success was the second crew.

In the Lent term of 1925 £90 were collected towards the purchase of an 'eight' from Sims. Very detailed accounts are henceforth kept of daily outings, and in general from this time on the Captain's notes on weekly training, on regattas visited, and on the bumping races are admirably full. On May 30 Steve Fairbairn coached the first crew and the Club for the first time adopted the Jesus style of rowing - short sharp strokes to secure a high rating through the water. This style was from time to time abandoned and resumed. Under the captaincy of W.V. Howells the PBC was third in rank for the Michell Cup, an award for that club whose showing on the Cam has been best over the year in a variety of events.

In the Michaelmas term of 1925 one of the new members was E.C. Westbury, whose ardent support of rowing was especially evident in 1956: in the Lent term he presented a silver cup to be rowed for by senior scullers, and later gave an oar to the 'Little Rose' to commemorate the remarkable successes of that year. In the Lent term of 1926 one of the old banners was renovated - a task more recently taken in hand by the Combination Room Butler's wife, Mrs Moffett. The Club resolved to celebrate the Lents by constructing a bomb, but the Captain deemed it dangerous, and so it was thrust up a chimney in Gisborne court. It was rediscovered in the next term, and,

whilst being carried through Old court, it blew up. Of course, the man carrying it was sent down. Also in early 1926 A.R. Miller was chosen to row in the Blue boat, but illness kept him from the actual race. The May term of 1926 saw the first boat making four bumps, the first such rise since the turn of the century. The Club as a whole were second in the Michell Cup rating. Encouraged by this a crew went for the first time to Henley to compete in the Thames Cup; entry was fairly regular until just before the second World War. It is noted that they rowed in a centre-seated craft, and since a side-seated boat was still used for training in 1937 one gathers that the former was something of a novelty.

The first boat moved steadily up through its division in the next couple of years, and was joined, just in time, by a second crew in the Mays of 1928. But in the Michaelmas term of 1927 there was surprise when the centenary was found to be at hand. A dinner and a ball were planned, and, as a more durable measure, an appeal to build a new boat house was publicised. The present house was begun in early 1928 and cost £4000; it was designed by Wheeler, as was the handsome boat house of Trinity Hall. The rowing success of the centenary year was appropriately splendid: in the Lent races three boats made thirteen bumps, and in the May term the Club won the Michell Cup, largely on the strength of twenty-one bumps overall. (It should be pointed out that in the previous years the coaching was excellent; the coaches had come from Selwyn, a club that won the cup regularly.) The Centenary dinner was held on June 9th in the Hall, and the ball on June 13th.

The following year was equally successful and the Michell Cup was retained. The most conspicuous Petrean ever, James Mason, who became a movie star, joined the PBC and in due course was a regular member of the first crew. In the Lent term slides were lengthened to nine inches; now they can be over sixteen. During the May term H. Butterfield is one of those thanked for breakfasting the crew; in Michaelmas of 1955, when he was Master, he was elected President of the Club in recognition of his continued support.

In the Michaelmas term of 1929 T.G. Askwith joined the PBC. When he won the Diamond sculls in 1933 The Observer's correspondent said he would surely be a 'Pothouse Immortal', and the many Petrean oarsmen he has coached and encouraged will assert the truth of the prophecy. Tom was treasurer in 1930-31, and Captain for the following year and part of the next. He was Secretary of the CUBC in 1933. In the Michaelmas term of 1931 he was the first member of the PBC since Lord Kelvin in 1843 to win the Colquhoun sculls. In the Lent term of 1932 he rowed at 3 in the winning Blue boat. This crew, rowing for the Leander Club, won the Grand and so were chosen to represent Great Britain at the Los Angeles Olympic Games. Tom also rowed in the Berlin Olympics. On both occasions the national VIII came fourth. Even after his personal success at Henley he continued to row with the PBC; nowadays his active support of the Club's interests, both on and off the towpath, is an example of that continuity of fellowship which obliterates the years.

In the Michaelmas term of 1930 swivels were placed on the riggers of the first and second boats; and in the Lent term of 1931 sliding seats could be used in all divisions; in that term also coxes were permitted to row in bumping races. The Club's chief goal was to get the boat into the first division, and in the May term this was achieved (but not maintained). In the Michaelmas term of 1931 B.H.G. Wormald, now Senior Fellow, joined the PBC as a coxswain, and for a couple of years steered the first eight. A word on regattas. During these years, and indeed until quite recently, the PBC rowed regularly at the Reading Head race, and then took three days to row down the Thames through twenty-one locks to the Tideway to compete in the Head of the River

race at Putney. Both events are held after the Lent term. After the May term Marlow was the classic prelude to Henley, and often the second crew competed in the one, leaving the latter to the first crew. In 1931 the PBC reached the semi-finals of the Thames Cup. During the Long Vacation the few oarsmen in residence might visit small regattas, such as Bedford or Norwich, in fours, and success often crowned the effort.

In general the PBC acquitted itself well in the 30's. In the Lent term of 1934 J.T. Sinclair won the Fairbairn Junior Sculls. But the minute books tell of the difficulties of getting coaches, and in 1937 only eight men came forward to row. The accounts of activities in 1938 and 1939 were not written up; indeed the book itself was missing for about a decade, which is a warning to watch secretaries carefully: they are the custodians of our past.

1940 - 1956

The second outbreak of 'furor Teutonicus' did not put a complete stop to undergraduate life. A handful of men were in residence and the PBC fared well during the war. For those six years the London School of Economics, rowing under its own colours, was the Club's guest. If there was any racing between Michaelmas 1939 and Lent 1941 no record of it has been preserved. Thereafter racing was on three days each in March and June eights, as they were officially called; so in May 1941 first boat colours were once again awarded. In Michaelmas of 1941 there was a tolerable membership of twenty four, and two eights went out twice a week. Fines were to be strictly enforced and the sum to go to a Spitfire fund; later the recipient of this largesse was Addenbrooke's Hospital. The membership increased over the years, but in Michaelmas 1944 it dropped to a dozen. In the March eights of 1943 there were three divisions of forty-seven crews; our first boat went up four places and into the first division: oars were awarded to some of the crew. The following year J. Heyman, now a Fellow and Professor of Engineering was Captain. The coach in these successful years was D. Baker, Chief Clerk of the College, who was a member of the Cambridge Town Rowing Club; in 1945 he was made an honorary member of the PBC. In the Lent term of 1945, although the Club's membership stood at only nineteen, there were two eights on the river none the less.

During the war bottle parties were the regular form of celebration, but a Bump supper was held in 1943 and the frugal menu is worth record: purée de légumes, carré d'agneau, pommes rôties, choux braisé au jus, tarte aux pommes à la crème and fromage à l'anglaise with coffee. No wine is mentioned.

In the Michaelmas term of 1945 the membership stood at twenty-seven, of whom four had matriculated before or during the war but had interrupted their course to serve under arms. Training was re-introduced before the bumps in 1946, and the cox was instructed to inspect his men at 10:15 to be sure they were abed. During the Long Vacation residence some men on the PBC rowed in the Town bumps - often disorganised but agreeable - under the colours of the CTRC. It is to our credit to record that for the past few years the PBC, with a little outside help, has regularly rowed in these races, and it maintains an honourable position in the middle of the second of three divisions.

In the Michaelmas term of 1946, when there were twenty-nine members, the CUBC restricted outings to four a week, but the limit returned to six in the May term. For the next couple of years the entertainment after the Club suppers at term end was made up of recitations of poetry and music. Training and exercise were matter for debate: morning walks were adopted, dropped, and re-adopted for a good number of years; other sports, like tennis, were recommended, taken up and then discouraged.

The Michaelmas term of 1948 marks the beginning of the rise which reached its unimagined peak in 1956. The bumping races of 1949 are not perhaps encouraging, but the officers had 'carded' every freshman, and so membership was sufficient to allow four crews to enter the Fairbairn Cup race of 1948. In the following Lent term was held the first race against our sister college in Oxford, Merton. This friendly encounter, alternately on Isis and on Cam, was fairly regular until of late. Another friendly fixture that began about this time was with King's College, London; the reason for the connection between the clubs is nowhere given, and no race is recorded after 1968. Also during this period it was customary to race Selwyn over the Fairbairn course a week before the Cup race itself; the loser bought the winner beer. Prices never cease to be interesting: the supper in June 1949 cost 7/6, but with wine and tips

it came to 15/-; in Michaelmas of 1971 £2 was reckoned dear, but the cost is now about £7.

On May 10 1949 'Hugo de Balsham' was launched, the first new boat in ten years, after delivery of a Latin oration; in the Michaelmas term of 1955 she had made thirty bumps in fifty races, and been bumped only once, but her best was yet to come. 'John Cosin' was launched in the Lent term of 1955, after a less polished Latin oration. In January 1959 came 'Lord Kelvin', and on May 25 1969 'Tom Askwith'; this fine shell is sixty feet long instead of fifty-six, and of shallow draught to help her through the Gut: a true Cam boat. The latest shell was launched on November 30 1975 and appropriately named after Ernie Lingwood, our boatman for 41 years.

In the May term of 1949 the PBC were given a cup for pair-oared races by Mr Mew, a Jesus man who had coached the Club for some years. Crews once again took to competing at Marlow and Henley.

The Michaelmas term of that year saw a stiffening of effort, and a concentration on success in the Fairbairn Cup race: no-one was to enter CUBC trials and college fours were abandoned. Starting twenty-first, the first boat finished ninth; the PBC entered four crews, a sign of healthy membership. At the Putney Head race of 1950 the first boat won the clinker pennant and entered the first division there.

The Michaelmas term of 1950 was similar to the previous one, but the crew moved to sixth in the Fairbairn; training was strict and outings long. By Lent of 1951 the regimen was more exacting: Sunday runs were instituted, and physical training in the mornings. That term a Henley appeal fund was launched to realise £300 for the purchase of a shell and the payment of the expenses of the visit, reckoned at £200; the appeal was a success but the shell seems not to have been bought. Relief from this picture of determination is provided by the bold crew (whose nickname will not sully this page) that visited Lyons in the summer of 1951; the bulk of their visit was passed in eating and sightseeing. They were awarded medals for a race they 'won' against plainly inferior competition.

In Michaelmas of 1951 the first boat moved to third place in the Fairbairn Cup. In the Lent term of 1952 Peterhouse were fourth at the Reading Head, and eleventh at Putney. In the May term the fourth boat was awarded oars on the strength of a bump and an overbump (i.e., a rise of four places), and so supper could be held in Hall. The first boat in the Lents of 1953 is noteworthy, for it alone in the first division rose four places, and nothing so clearly illustrates the impetus of the Club in these six years. In the Michaelmas term of 1953 coxes were urged to be decorous in their supervision of crews in training (one member suggests all should train on brandy). Cinemas were put out of bounds in the Lent term of 1954 as unhealthy, and in the May term, though the first boat failed to stay in the first division, the second, fourth and fifth boats won their oars. And in the Lents of 1955 the first boat was fourth in the first division.

In the Michaelmas term of 1955 there were some discouraging tokens: the Cam had been drained, for a start, so tubbing had to be done on the upper river, the Granta, which was convenient, but rowing down by Clayhythe, which was not. Furthermore, there was apathy in the 'Amal.' club, which grew unwilling to bear the PBC's expenses. Despite all this the oarsmen trained without remission. They won the CUBC clinker fours race against LMBC; and for the first, and so far only, time Peterhouse won the Fairbairn Cup, a full seven seconds ahead of the holders and founders, Jesus. The Captain, B. W. Oxley, enjoined upon the crew secrecy concerning outings and training. In the Lent term he defused anxiety by establishing as the crew's goal a secure place in the first division of the Mays. That achieved, senior oarsmen would be released from rowing in the Lent bumps, since at that time

no-one who had rowed in the first division of the Mays was eligible to row in that division of the Lents (a rule abolished in 1966, rather to the detriment of small clubs). In the 1956 Lents the eight rowed over on the first day. On the second they bumped 1st and 3rd Trinity at Ditton corner, but there was no acknowledgment; the issue was left in no doubt when the refractory cox of that crew was hoiked from his seat by the Glasshouses. The cox of LMBC, on the third day, had learnt the lesson and conceded at Ditton before the bump was fairly made. The fourth day saw Jesus bumped and Peterhouse Head of the River. The crew, from the bow, were: D.G. Harper, E.A. Jackson, R. van Hoeken, C.W. Gear, A.M. Smith, B.W. Oxley, M.H. Bartlett, T.G. Hewlett (stroke), and C.E. Phelps (cox); their coach was D.B.C. Taylor, Fellow and Tutor, an Irish Olympic oarsman whose enthusiasm and inspired coaching are regularly praised in the minutes, until he removed to New Zealand where he is now the Vice-Chancellor of Victoria University. The bump supper, the awarded oars and rudder (including their decoration), were gifts of the College to the men. The burning of a boat on Coe Fen was much assisted by the Dean, who was seen at the fen-gate of the Fen Court handing out doors for burning to parties visiting from other colleges. The May races of 1956 were also successful, and the Captain's policy realised: the first boat stood at twelfth in the first division. The PBC of course won the Michell Cup. A crew went on to Henley to be coached by Tom Askwith for the Ladies' Plate. In the final heat they were pitted against another outsider, Magdalene College, who lost by only a third of a length; much credit is due to the cox, D.M.F. Bright, who anticipated a gust of wind and steered into it, while the rival crew crossed the course lanes in it. It should be noted that there were no rowing Blues or even 'Trial Caps' in the College at this time. At Henley there was some re-arrangement in the bow: P.C.J. Metcalf replaced Gear and rowed at 2.

In the Michaelmas term of 1956 the membership is recorded as standing at twenty-eight, but only seven freshmen joined the Club. And up to 1964 the supply of new blood was too thin to allow our hard won position to be maintained. Bartlett won the Colquhoun sculls and went on to row in the winning Blue boat of 1957, for which van Hoeken was spare man; Smith won a Trials Cap.

Of durable importance was the foundation of the PBC Trust Fund, a suggestion of N.A. Kaye (Captain in 1933). The restiveness in the 'Amal.' Club was a simple warning. Rowing is expensive, and there are times when the undergraduate body as a whole bridles at the drain it makes upon income. Of course, if the boat club's membership includes, say, a quarter of resident Petreans - and membership at the moment stands at 47 - then attacks are easily fended off. But when membership is low (as it often has been in the past twenty years) then the necessity of a reserve fund is self-evident. Quite apart from attacks upon expenditure, there is the matter of equipment. As the Roman poet Lucretius said 'there have been many improvements made recently in ships', and he could have added that they cost money. Carbon or tungsten is now used to build boats and oars; the mechanism of the rigger is always being refined; slides and stretchers admit of endless variation; rudders have disappeared from sight. Also the costs of transport and insurance, of lodging crews, and even of entry fees do not stand still. Many former members therefore see an annually covenanted gift to the Fund as an assurance that future Petreans will be able to enjoy, as they did, all the advantages of a secure society with the best of modern equipment. In short, the Fund guarantees that in another hundred years this story will be continued.

1957 - 1978

The next twenty years can only be glanced at. The difficulties in which the PBC found itself were not irremediable. The officers in May of 1959, for example, looked proudly upon the consolidation of some fifty oarsmen after a Michaelmas that saw only eleven members and no freshmen. Their policy paid off in the bumps of 1960, and decline was arrested. In the Lent term of 1963 the ice was six inches thick on the Long Reach. Larger clubs therefore trained at Earith or St. Neots during the six weeks of the hard freeze, which in the event led to the races being cancelled. The long-term result of this natural 'disaster' was that freshmen got no instruction for a term, and enthusiasm for rowing evaporated. But to put the drop of our first boat into perspective, both LMBC I and Jesus II went down four places in the next Mays. Numbers henceforth become the burden of the Captains' complaint, and the minutes notice, as they could hardly fail to do, the general collapse of interest in sport. The evidence for rowing's decline is vivid: in 1954 the entry for the Fairbairn Cup race was eighty-seven, and by 1966 it had dropped to forty-three; in 1977 sixty-five men's crews competed and eight ladies'. The sad result of this period is with us yet: Peterhouse no longer has its own playing fields on Porson Road (we now share those of Clare College), and most men who wish to play in land sport find themselves clubbing with non-Petreans. Only the Boat Club remains intact, though amalgamation has been sometimes, but not recently, in the air. Once the PBC suffered from the rise of athletics, but now, regrettably, it stands over their ruin.

In the Michaelmas term of 1966 it was resolved to take the Club in hand, and by forgoing any hope of personal success in that year, to lay a foundation for the future. In fact success was met with by the men of that year: the first eight won the Mayor's plate at the Durham regatta which the Club had recently been regularly visiting (and in 1969 a four won the Corporation Challenge cup). But the principle of unripe time was at work and, if men refused to row, or to work at the oar, all the selfless planning in the world could not brake the slide. In the Lent term of 1968 the first boat had its first bump in four years, and it was made, somewhat surprisingly upon that rising star, Churchill I, a crew that had only once before been thus insulted. In May of 1968 only two of the five boats were rowed by Club members, the rest being gentlemen, rigger-players and thrill seekers (a recurrent pattern in these years). In that term the new singlet - royal blue with two horizontal white stripes - was adopted by the first eight; lower crews continued to wear trimmed zephyrs.

In the Michaelmas term of 1969 a freshman's personal effort salvaged the disastrous recruiting. For the next couple of years the Fairbairn Cup race was rowed upstream from Bait's Bite Lock to a point just above the gasworks; the building of the Elizabeth Bridge caused the reversal. In the Michaelmas term of 1970 a freshman, M.J. Hart, joined the PBC; he had been trained to row at Hampton Grammar School, and so his skill was even at that time of 'Varsity class, and when he won his full Blue in 1972 he was already marked out as an oarsman of international status. With his partner in the double sculls, C. Baillieu, he won the silver medal at the Olympic Games of 1976 and the gold medal at last year's World Rowing Championships; this Cambridge pair have frequently won at Henley and at International Regattas. There can be no doubt that Mike Hart will be for a long time the most successful oarsman ever to have rowed under Peterhouse colours.

In the Michaelmas term of 1971 Ernie Lingwood retired after having tended the Club's boats for forty-one years. He had completed his apprenticeship as a boat builder at Banham's, and he used his skills to good effect in keeping our boats in first-

class order. Generations of Boat Club men will remember his skillful pole-work at the start of bumping races, and will have a clear picture of him emerging from his workshop with a welcoming smile and a helping hand whenever a boat returned from an outing. A special dinner was held in his honour at the end of term, and was attended by 35 old members of the Club. It is a fitting memorial of his service that our newest shell, of deep draught for use in regattas, bears his name.

About this time land training in circuits became popular. Hitherto, beyond morning walks and limbering up exercises, fitness was left to its own development from rowing. But gradually a series of exercises, often rendered hellish by the use of weights, was adopted, and by Lent of 1972 it is recorded that an outing and training consumed two and one half hours. Fifteen hours a week is no small portion of an undergraduate's time. Long ago Rouse Hall was saddened by the increasing 'professionalism' in college rowing that was generated by the use of slides and other refinements. The gap between gentlemen and players has widened, and first boat oarsmen have heavy claims made upon their time and dedication. It is worth recalling the full effort they put out whenever we look in 'The Times' for that short black line which makes or mars a June morning.

It should be recorded - nefas! - that in Michaelmas of 1969 and again after the Lents of 1972 ladies attended the Club supper. Bonhomie implies one gender only.

The Club's recent past is a pleasure to record, however briefly. From the early '70's the officers have recognized the basic importance of numbers, and a general change in attitude among undergraduates has helped to swell the ranks. Coaching has always been a problem, but we are very fortunate in Tom Askwith and Gordon Hewlett. In 1975 under the Captaincy of P.C. Dracott the PBC again won the Michell Cup, and the first boat once again secured the right to compete at Henley. The crew now regularly attends regattas and head-races, and ascent is the order of the day. In the Lents of 1978 the second, third and fourth boat won their oars, and the PBC finds two of its crews in the second division. The society is in a position to celebrate its one hundred and fiftieth anniversary with substantial pride.