

OLD MEMBERS' CALENDAR

1998

SATURDAY 3 OCTOBER

GAUDY - matriculation 1974 to 1977

SATURDAY 28 NOVEMBER

OLD MEMBERS v STUDENTS FOOTBALL DAY

If you matriculated before 1988 and would like to play, please drop us a line. All younger ex-footballers will be mailed separately.

FRIDAY 4 DECEMBER

CHRISTMAS CAROL SERVICE – 5.30pm

TUESDAY 8 DECEMBER

VARSITY RUGBY MATCH – Twickenham

Match tickets £24 or £18. Apply to Development Office by 30 October (cheques payable to 'The Bursar, Exeter College'). Indicate the address to which you would like tickets sent.

and in 1999...

FEBRUARY

Under-30s Old Members London dinner

Edinburgh Old Members dinner (provisional)

Turl Street Arts Festival

Torpids

APRIL

Boat Race

College Ball

MAY 26-29

Eights (and Boat Club Association dinner)

JUNE or JULY

Old Members v students Cricket match and BBQ

JULY 2

Gaudy - matriculation 1990 to 1992

OCTOBER

Association Dinner

Term Dates 1998-99

Michaelmas October 11 – December 5

Hilary January 17 – March 13

Trinity April 25 – June 19

The North American reunion in 2000 will take place on Friday 31st March and Saturday 1st April 2000.

EVENTS INFORMATION AND BOOKING

Ring Marguerite Harrington on 01865 279600

Exact dates of events in the first half of 1999 will appear in the Register in December

Marguerite Harrington has just started work in the Development Office, and will take over from Matthew Preston in July. Marguerite read English at Exeter College from 1993 until 1996, since when she has travelled in Japan and has been working for Opportunity International, a charity based in Oxford.



LECTURES

As well as being lifelong members of College, all Old Members also continue to be members of Oxford University. As such, they are all entitled and welcome to attend lectures in Oxford. There is a massive range of lectures offered, many given by world-renowned figures. The best place to find out details of lectures is in the University Gazette. The easiest way to get hold of this is on the internet (<http://info.ox.ac.uk/gazette>). If you do not have internet access, please make enquiries about subscribing to Ms M. Clements, Oxford University Press, Great Clarendon Street, Oxford OX2 6DP.

VISITING

Old Members and their guests are welcome to visit the College at all times – please do identify yourself as such to the Porter. If the Porters are not too busy, they will be happy to let you in to see the renovations that have taken place in the Hall. Old Members are welcome to read in the Library; please phone the Sub-Librarian to arrange to be let in.

HIGH TABLE

Old Members of the College who at least three years previously have passed all the examinations for any degree of the University are entitled to dine at High Table once a term free of charge (wines must be paid for, however). If you would like to do so, please telephone the Development Office on 01865 279600.

OLD MEMBERS' DINNERS

With the exception of the annual dinner for recently graduated Old Members, we feel that the Old Members dinners that we held earlier this year would continue to be most successful if held every two years. Leave a month free to recover from Millennium party hangovers, and book your diaries for February or March 2000.

BODLEIAN LIBRARY

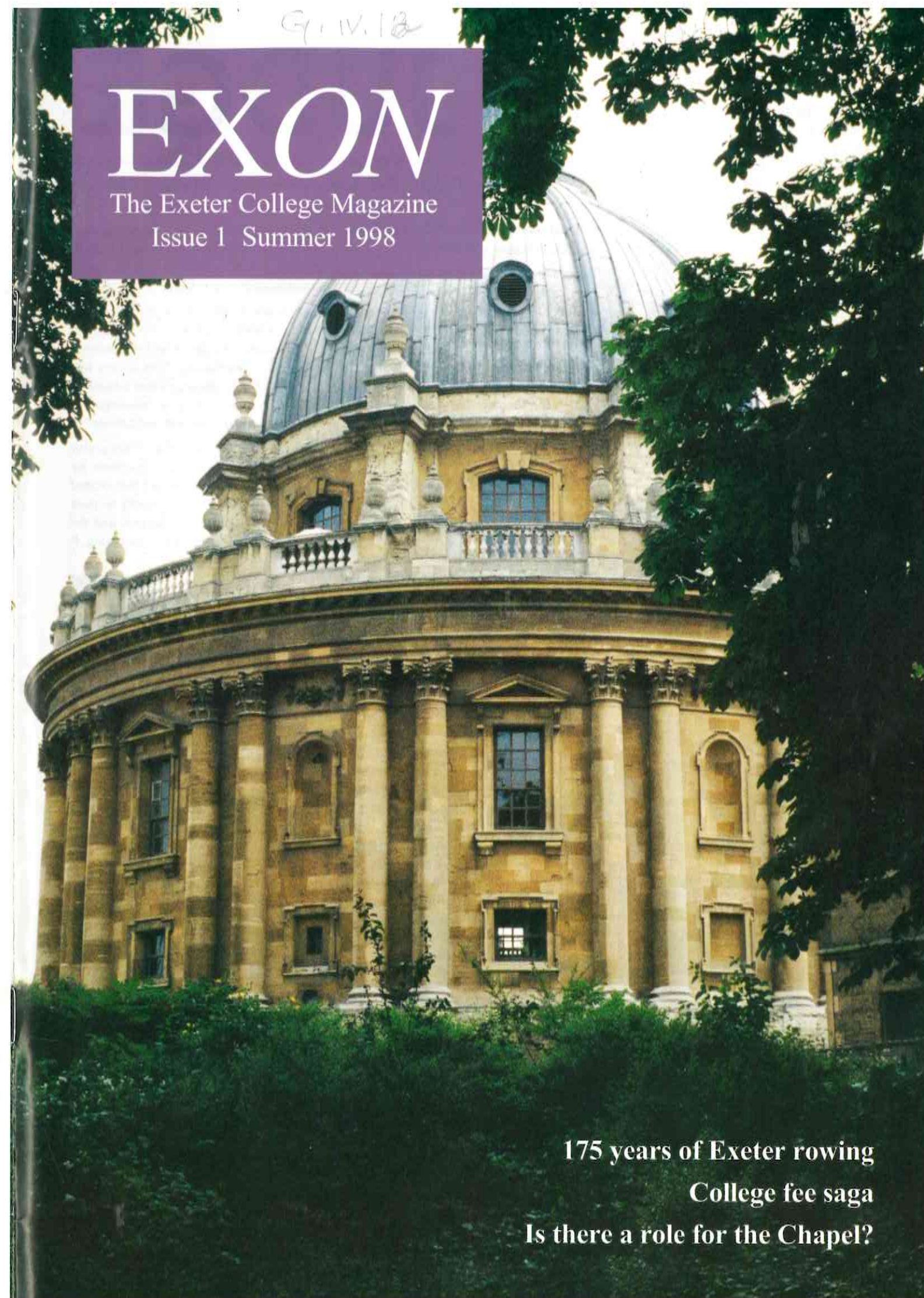
Degree holders are entitled to apply for a Bodleian reader's card at nominal rates. Applications should be made to the Admissions Office, Bodleian Library, Broad Street, Oxford OX1 3BG.

WEBSITE

The College website is due for an overhaul soon, and can be found at <http://www.exeter.ox.ac.uk>. The University website is <http://www.ox.ac.uk>.

6.14.18
EXON

The Exeter College Magazine
Issue 1 Summer 1998



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College fee saga
Is there a role for the Chapel?

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JUDGE ... AND JURY

Once every twelve years, Exeter College nominates one of its Fellows to serve as Proctor for a year. Politics Fellow and Junior Proctor Dr Michael Hart discusses the role with Matthew Preston.

Most of us have heard of 'the Proctors', but what exactly does a Proctor do?

There are two Proctors in the University. They each serve for a year and they are the senior bureaucrats in the University working mainly to the Vice Chancellor serving on all the main University committees. They're also delegates of Oxford University Press, and have a say in what is published. They are the senior disciplinary officers of the University and they represent the University on a whole series of outside bodies. The two Proctors work alongside the Assessor, the third post, established about 30 years ago. The Proctors, themselves, have been going for 750 years and if we survive we're going to have a celebratory party in October.

Is it actually possible to have a concrete effect on the University while holding the post for only one year?

In certain ways, yes. I'm the Junior Proctor and the Junior Proctor is in overall charge of all undergraduate examinations and graduate taught courses. As a result of things that have happened this summer I shall be proposing various changes in the way the exams are administered and I'll be putting those through the University committees this autumn and winter. Changes, for example, in the method of entry to examination, making new and different provision for dyslexic candidates in University exams and also trying to regularise certain of the administration at the Exam Schools. We inherited some changes from our predecessors which we helped to push through and we hope to leave a load of business for our successors.

You don't find yourselves weighed down by any sort of 'Yes, Minister' attitude on the part of the University civil service?

The Proctors are in a very unusual position because we have our own staff in the University Offices and our own area of the building in which people can only come if we either invite them or summon them. And so what tends to happen is that instead of being weighed down by the senior University officials, we send out questions to them to answer so that we can take initiatives. Now, I'm sure if you allowed yourself to be weighed down by the University bureaucracy, yes it would weigh

you down because it's a pretty big bureaucracy for one building. Overall, though, I don't think this is an over-administered University.

There's much talk, both in the Press and more widely, about the role of administrators, not just in higher education but in other institutions. How do you feel Oxford's almost amateur ethos compares with the administrative managerial approach of many modern institutions?

I don't think that the University administration is ineffective, but there are problems arising from the fact that Oxford is such a federated body. Trying to push issues through colleges, faculties and the University can be very time-consuming. It



Michael Hart (right) with Senior Proctor Roger Ainsworth

does mean, however, that when decisions are taken they're usually well thought-out, and those professional administrators we have are there to give us the sort of guidance we require. But I think it's quite important to remember that in Oxford it is still broadly the academics who run the University. It's also the academics who raise most of the external funding for the University. A professional managerial style is one which is gradually creeping in but I don't think that, at the moment, we would want the University to be run in that way simply because it is not designed to be run in that way. And redesigning the University ... well, that really is turning a horse into a camel, isn't it?

When most students think of the Proctors they think of being 'summoned before the

Proctors'. What sort of issues do Proctors deal with that college disciplinary authorities don't?

Anything that counts as a University offence: misbehaviour in exams, misusing computers and computer facilities, gaining false entry to the University by providing false references or claiming to have qualifications that people actually haven't gained. I think when most students, most undergraduate students, think of Proctors they probably think of Proctors controlling end of exam celebrations. That's what brings most of the undergraduates whom we see before the Proctors. All issues which come before the Proctors are of course terribly serious but I can't say that flour-throwing and champagne-spraying is necessarily as important as introducing viruses into the computer system.

Is there anything you would change in the disciplinary procedures in the University?

Well, they are in fact being changed at the moment in line with the findings of a national inquiry. I think for the immediate future those changes are the ones which we shall have to implement. The weak point in the disciplinary arrangements is that often it is very difficult to gather sufficient information to press home an important issue.

Is there any part of the job that is especially esoteric?

I doubt there are many other Universities where an incoming official has to brush up his Latin in order to confer degrees on students; it probably hasn't done me any harm. We're probably also the only University where there are fourteen degree days in a year, so degree ceremonies are quite consuming, and take over a whole number of week-ends. An innovation this year is that the Vice Chancellor has decided to make a short introductory speech, and to everyone's amazement it's in English.

What has been the most challenging aspect of the job?

Learning the structure of the University committee system very rapidly and being able to contribute to it from day one. On the very first day that I was installed as Proctor I had to run through and sign all of the land deals and many of the contracts

for the new Business School which Oxford is constructing, so I think I spent a good £10,000,000 on my first day. The most interesting aspect of the job is simply its enormous variety. It would be impossible to take an active role in everything for which the Proctors are responsible. I think I'm sitting on about 65 committees but I've rather lost count.

And what about it have you enjoyed the most?

Having the chance to meet some of the people who visit Oxford. Some of them are



very flattered to be invited to Oxford. I've enjoyed showing round one or two of the great and the good. The other thing that I personally have found very interesting is being a delegate of the University Press and making decisions about publications. Any Proctor would be pretty unwise to take on more than a couple of books at a time, though, because the Proctor's life is so full with other business.

How are you coping with the 'No Smoking' rule in the University Offices?

Curiously, almost as soon as I arrived it was proposed to abolish smoking in the one part of the canteen where it's been allowed up till now. I'm resisting this change vigorously!

Rumour has it that on your first day you consigned the laptop computer and the e-mail facilities to a box in the corner of your office. Is this true?

Yes, I don't think we'll be needing those this year.

Welcome to EXON, the new annual magazine for current members and Old Members of Exeter College. The Register will of course continue to appear, with its scholarly and informative articles, and its lists of announcements, freshers, degrees and the like. We hope that EXON will offer students and Old Members the opportunity to air their views on issues connected with the College, and for its audience to be kept abreast of the non-academic side of life at Exeter. By necessity, the balance of this first issue is weighted rather more to the current member side than the Old Member one. For future issues, the Development Office would be very happy to receive prospective articles of between 300 and 1,000 words from Old Members, whether directly related to the College, or of wider interest to readers.

This has, we feel, been a very positive year – of course here the year runs from October to September. Over six hundred Old Members have attended at least one College event between February and July, more, as far as we know, than in any other six month period in the almost seven hundred year history of the College. While I will step down as Development Officer in October and return to my research, the Development Office will be a permanent fixture and will play a central role in strengthening the relationship between Old Members and the College. Before too long, a part of the Development Office's remit will consist of fund-raising efforts to support needy students, academic standards and the like. But fund-raising is only one component of the relationship, and we are particularly keen that those who feel unable or indeed unwilling to play a role on that front will continue to keep close links with the College and to participate in Old Member events.

Of course, we do not expect vast numbers of Old Members to want to throw themselves wholeheartedly into College life, but we do feel we can fill a regular place in Old Members' social calendars, allowing them to see old friends, to come with or without their families to one of the most beautiful cities in England, and even to partake of the odd bit of intellectual stimulation. On a personal note, it has been a great pleasure meeting so many Old Members of Exeter College over the last few months. I look forward to seeing more of you as I continue to play a voluntary role in the 'development' of Exeter College.

Matthew Preston

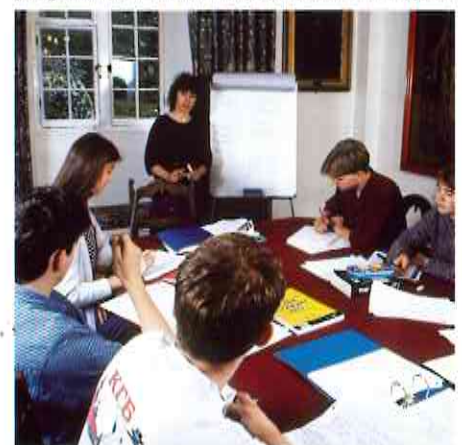
Not Endearing

Oxford and Cambridge have featured even more strongly than usual in the national press over the last twelve months. The main focus has been the future funding of the two universities and their colleges. The Rector, Dr Marilyn Butler, assesses the situation and the impact it will have on Exeter College



It has been a tough year in Oxford. We have been living in the aftermath of last summer's *Report of the National Committee of Inquiry into Higher Education*, commissioned by the previous government, and best known by the name of its respected chairman, Ron Dearing. In January we had our own Report, from the last Vice-Chancellor, Sir Peter North, on the Governance of Oxford. In February we learnt the new Government's decision, partly guided by the Dearing Report, to reduce public support for higher tuition costs (the 'college fee') at Oxford and Cambridge. For months we've had press releases, leaks, and gossip, a lot of it largely manufactured - but we still don't know precisely what's in store for the College in the post-Dearing era.

The Dearing Report was generally welcomed as bi-partisan and praised for three points especially. It had some civilized things to say on the importance to the nation of its universities, it pointed out that they were seriously underfunded, and it grasped a nettle the previous government shrank from - the principle that students with sufficient means should contribute towards their own tuition fees. The government picked out the last point first, by introducing its own scheme to gather £1000 from students at the start of the university year, beginning with freshers this autumn. In the two collegiate universities the colleges are collecting the money, to pass on to the university, which doesn't keep it either. Universities, which saw the Dearing proposal as a much-needed boost for Higher



Education, grumble that students' money speeds direct to the Treasury.

Oxford and Cambridge alone were affected by a second cost-cutting suggestion in Dearing to catch the government's eye - that there should be a review of public funding for Oxbridge teaching, which has been higher per student than elsewhere. After taking advice from the Higher Education Funding Council, the Government gave us their decision in outline late last term - the disparity in support would be gradually reduced but not eradicated; the excellence of teaching at the two Universities was to be preserved. But without precise figures the depth of the cuts and the mechanisms for future public funding to Oxford and Cambridge are still unclear. Along with other U.K. universities, we will anyway experience a 1% cut next year. In addition we seem very likely to lose about 40% of the extra support for tuition, probably reducing direct government support to the University by about 10%. The cuts, known to bureaucrats by the grimly humorous euphemism of efficiency gains, will begin at the earliest in 1999, and continue at the rate of £1.4 million a year until, ministers promise, a floor is reached - leaving Oxford teaching some £7 million pounds worse off each year.

If this proves correct Exeter will be under pressure over the next five to six years. We have time to adjust, and expect to come through. But the College and the University undoubtedly face some tough decisions, and if we get them wrong we could be seriously harmed.

You may be wondering why this is a major problem, given the overall size and wealth of Oxford. Our chart (facing page) shows income (e.g. Board and Lodging, Conferences) that wholly or largely balances against expenditure. Fees, for us and for most colleges, bring in easily the largest part of the teaching budget. Hitherto we have all set our own tuition fees, which have recently varied between about £2000 and £3500 a year across the two universities. Many recent commentators, inside and outside universities, have argued we should make

up the shortfall in public funding by asking students themselves to pay for it. Dearing explored the proposal that colleges and universities might charge a 'top-up', giving England or Britain a system of differential fees which would reflect the real diversity of provision. Students should be able to borrow more to get the education they want. Within a few years, many vice-chancellors will say privately, this element of privatization is bound to come. But in the meantime the government, already known to be opposed to further raising the cost for students, has inserted a clause in the recent Teaching and Higher Education Bill to prevent Oxford and Cambridge colleges from adjusting the fee. We must find another route, or see permanent damage both to our teaching system and to the thriving confederation of autonomous colleges within the university that was secured for 75 years in 1923 by the Oxford and Cambridge Act.

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Logically, if 60% of support for our undergraduate teaching remains, a positive view is being taken centrally of this provision and its value for higher education. The Government and its agents, notably the Higher Education Funding Council for England, have explicitly based their pronouncements on paragraph 74 of the Dearing Report, which reads as follows:

'Variations of the level of public funding for teaching ... should occur only where there is an approved difference in the provision; or society, through the Secretary of State and his or her agent, concludes, after examining an especially high level of funding, that in relation to other funding needs in higher education, it represents a good use of resources.'

In short, Dearing asked the Government to examine the amount of the support *and* the

nature and quality of the provision, to see if the public was getting a good deal. The Government quoted the paragraph in asking for HEFCE's advice. Some of us are left wondering whether that examination of the provision, how it compares with teaching elsewhere and its value to the system as a whole, has ever actually taken place. Advice given on this matter to the Government has been confidential; but nothing thus far published meets the carefully-worded Dearing queries. We need to be worried on this score. If Oxbridge's claims have not been partly upheld, and especially if they have not been examined at all, there's nothing to prevent further slicing of the rest of the funding in some annual spending review a few years down the road.

In line with other Colleges, Exeter's aim is to keep the essential features of our high-quality education. We are not fuzzy about what the provision is. Nor indeed about who delivers it. If students in the collegiate universities get an extra provision, it's largely because the colleges and universities have played distinct roles, and the system rests on this separation of powers.

Young students arriving at a large and formidable university gain, it's widely acknowledged, from living and working in a human-scale community within the larger one: in effect a large family, where you can know most people by sight, and talk to senior as well as junior members. It's a more natural environment than working in a department and living in a hall of residence, or commuting from home to classes and lectures. Young adults learn best from their peers when, as at Exeter, they get to know clever energetic people working in different fields, and haling from different classes, regions and nationalities.

The tutorial system imposes a demanding work-schedule, based on the weekly production of written work, brought

to the tutorial to be discussed, analyzed and supplemented. And not just by the teacher. Most Oxford tutorials involve a pair of students, some three or four. The criticism of peers matters profoundly; as in their second and third year students become increasingly self-reliant and enterprising, they notice progress or lack of it in their friends. The culture fosters habits of work and of inquiry, and respect for competence in the basic intellectual skills of information-gathering, analysis and synthesis.

Exeter's aim is to go on delivering the essential features of our high-quality education

But this student-centred work is ultimately governed by a syllabus, set by the university, just as it is examined anonymously by the university. As members of a Faculty or department, the combined college teachers across all disciplines set a syllabus which has an essential feature in common, the coverage of a field of knowledge. In their final examinations, Oxford students typically take eight papers, of which six, representing the core of a discipline, are likely to be compulsory. Only in their last year will most students choose more specialized optional papers which they may be able to present as a long essay or dissertation written in their own time.

Some current educationalists argue that Oxbridge cannot claim any 'value-added' element in their teaching, since they take in students with three As at A-level, and merely turn them out three years later at the equivalent standard, a good 2.1 or better. The answer to these sceptics is two taught elements, acquired wholly or substantially at university: knowledge, and the ability to present it in a lively and cogent form. Of these two, the first has a special importance for the higher education system as a whole.

Dearing asked implicitly for comparisons. An Oxford student will have written at least twice as much as most students in British universities. S/he will be able to use less than half of this in the examinations determining his or her degree. All those essays taken together constitute that individual's coverage of the field. So does the two or three month period of reconsideration and committing to memory, in preparation for the final week of exams.

In Humanities subjects at least, no two Oxbridge students out of several hundred

will produce the same portfolio of answers. The range of work attempted across each discipline will be much wider than from universities teaching by selective coursework, thanks both to the breadth of the syllabus and the individual method used in college teaching. Diversity is as enriching and ultimately productive in the world of learning as in the natural world. Research projects of the future are generated during the undergraduate experience.

If the majority of British universities go over to a tailored syllabus, packaged in line with today's intellectual fashions, we will soon experience a chronic shortfall of graduates capable of achieving doctoral standard in three years, or of university teaching. The high-flying British universities all have the same vested interest in the maintaining our shared reputation for quality, largely based on the solid grounding we give undergraduates - or overseas students, bringing in precious graduate fees, will soon go elsewhere. The system can only gain from our defence of challenging comprehensive courses, to sustain the learning of tomorrow's generation.

The Dearing Report

Finally published in July 1997, and weighing in at 6kg, the Dearing Report represents the first overall review of Higher Education since the Robbins Report of 1963. Its main themes include the following:

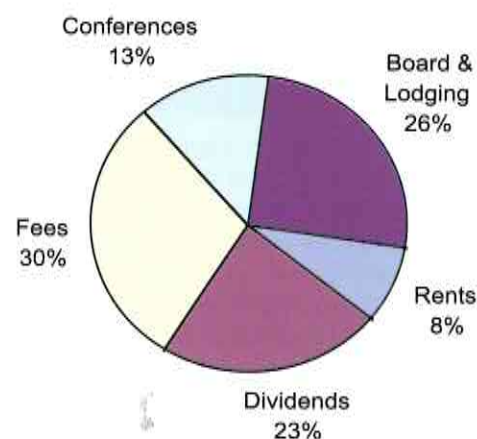
Nationally...

- § Expansion of Higher Education (HE), until 45% of the 18-21 age group is in full-time st
- § Ending of current cuts as unsustainable.
- § Students to pay £1,000 towards cost of tuition, supported by loans.

And for Oxford...

- § 'variations in the level of public funding for teaching ... should occur only where ... [they] represent a good use of resources'
- § 'the College fees at Oxford and Cambridge represent a substantial addition to the standard funding for institutions of HE. We propose that the Government reviews them'.
- § The possibility of variations in the levels of fees charged *not* ruled out, as long as sufficient bursaries provided.

Exeter College income 1997-98 Total = £3.4 million



Exeter, like most Oxford colleges, is built in the monastic tradition. Gilbert Scott's imposing nineteenth century chapel dominates the front quad. But what role does it play in what is an essentially secular society? Giles Hutchinson enquires.

MONASTIC LIFE?

If Socrates were able to stand in front of St. Paul's cathedral or the Clarendon building on Broad street, he would have a disorientating surprise: classical architecture that reminded him of home in 5th century B.C. Athens, but no one who could even name the classical gods, let alone sacrifice to them. A mediaeval monk brought through time to Exeter college might experience the same sense of odd familiarity: quadrangles, bells tolling, a chapel ... ? For that matter, he would be faced with a similar puzzle in London's four Inns of Court or many of the Victorian public schools: monastic form has been built into the architecture and woven into the gowns of the traditionally powerful institutions of Britain's establishment. The inheritance of the middle ages is unsurprising. Wealthy clerics involved in politics might display their magnificence by founding educational establishments (such as Bishop Stapeldon, sometime Chancellor of the Exchequer and eventually torn to death by a rioting London mob): the obvious teachers were other clerics, and the inward-looking cloister the institutional model. The pattern for Oxford and Cambridge was set; subsequently founders of schools signaled their aspirations to join the same educational world through their architecture, chapels, prayers and pseudo-monastic gowns.

The form may have been transmitted successfully, but has the monastic lifestyle completely vanished? The college of 1998 is quite definitely a secular institution, and its ethos does no more than reflect the post-Christian society of the U.K. at large. Perhaps it would be mistaken anyway to imagine that the atmosphere in Exeter College could ever have been confused with a monastic one. Although the fellows were clerics for a long time, students never had to be in holy orders. The most deceptive suggestion of a widespread quasi-monastic lifestyle is the size of the chapel itself. Actually it reflects the



numbers of a nineteenth and early twentieth century college, composed overwhelmingly of boys attending the same compulsory prayers which had been part of their routine at public school.

The most recently-formed universities in the U.K. are now built without chapels. Is ours an anachronism too? Among those who are already Christians, it is an obvious focus for showing solidarity and

supporting each other, especially given the wide range of styles of services and the invitation to communion extended to anyone who has been baptized. Quite apart from that however, any thoughtful members of college will not need to have many personal conversations with their peers to see two widely-felt needs which it is richly equipped to meet. Exeter now has an excellent official peer support

system supplied by the students themselves. As someone who arrived first time around in 1991 when there was not even an induction week for Freshers, it is striking how much more seriously the student body now takes its own responsibility and obvious potential for showing concern for its own members. However, the chaplain's role brings with it qualities which have the potential to make his or her personal support and empathy particularly telling. Unlike the university-wide help organizations, the chaplain really shares the daily life of Exeter College and knows the personalities who have to get along with each other there: on the other hand, he or she has a distance from those relationships which brings a healthy perspective to them. He or she brings to their listening role all the insights of someone who has the responsibility of being a parent, but not the preconceptions about the student before them that the student's own family hold.

Deliberately, and perhaps paradoxically, I have not started by

no other institution of British life simultaneously has so large a public profile but is so massively unfamiliar as the Christian church

drawing attention to the chaplain's other obvious role, as religious guide. That approach reflects the paradoxical attitudes to religion manifested by the generation of those British people who are in their thirties or younger. For us no other institution of British life simultaneously has so large a public profile but is so massively unfamiliar as the Christian church. Very few of us know personally any priest, monk or nun. Our response to pastoral care is just one area in which the church feels our colossal ignorance, and resultant suspicion or indifference. Many of us have forgotten, if we ever knew, that the priest's job involves offering exactly the sort of personal support which so many students seek at one time or another. Of those who do know, many have a frankly anachronistic suspicion of being pressurized about or judged and condemned for their religious or moral attitudes. The usual reality is that priests know as well as, if not better than the next



the unthinking assumption that we know how it offers to meet our needs; yet I suspect that by a paradox our actual lack of familiarity means that we make that rejection in profound ignorance. Giles Hutchinson read *Literae Humaniores* at Exeter College from 1991 to 1995, and is now studying for an M.Phil. in Latin Literature, also at Exeter.

person that one's paramount priority on encountering someone in distress is to love and accept them at the most basic level without passing judgement on them.

The other side of the paradox is that we are also the generation with a particularly conspicuous spiritual thirst. Although famously we are part of the crowds for whom Princess Diana's funeral was such a strangely compelling event, and a generation with a dilettantish liking for New Age cults, I am thinking primarily of the vastly greater horizons made possible by the explosion in cheap travel over the last ten years or so. It is not uncommon to meet western people in Oxford who for one reason or another have not engaged with Christianity but are attracted, if only temporarily, to Buddhism or another eastern religion; which at one level is all the more surprising, given the linguistic and cultural barriers. Presumably a strong force in the attraction is the unconscious perception of a vacuum of religious sustenance in British culture.

The irony in a college like Exeter is profound. The chapel is in fact the last reminder in the midst of the community of the kind of latent religious rhythms in daily life, and the resulting personal growth, that can attract us on our travels in a distant culture. The weekday begins with a few minutes of morning prayer at 8.30 am, just before finalists head for the day into the college library. At 6.15 p.m. the prayers of evensong mark the end of the working day. On alternate Wednesdays at 9.30 p.m. the choir sings the twenty minute monastic plainchant service of compline, prayers before going to sleep. On Sunday mornings at 9 am there is a simple communion service with hymns, then breakfast together afterwards. The framework is clear.

The challenge to the chapel with regard to the Exeter community is the same one that faces the church with regard to British society at large, in which most people say they believe in God, or are at least agnostic. The church is so ingrained in the culture that if we reject it, it is on

H.M.S. EXETER

On 8 May 1997, two Fellows, twelve students and 4 staff members set off for a day at sea on board HMS Exeter, a Type 42 Guided Missile Destroyer. Leaving College at 5am, we arrived in Plymouth just before nine. There were 250 visitors on board HMS Exeter that day: from Sea Cadets from the City of Exeter, to veterans who had served on previous ships of the same name.

In the morning we were given a tour of the ship, including the Operations Room, in almost complete darkness but for the lights from the radar sets. We also saw the huge missiles that would be used in time of war. After a genial lunch in the Wardroom several demonstrations took place: flares were fired and shot at, a helicopter circled around, two RAF Tornados flew overhead at great speed and a high-powered motor boat showed prowess on a rather choppy sea!

Every member of the ship's company treated us like VIPs; we were saluted on to the ship, and saluted off. Arriving back in Oxford at 8pm, everyone agreed that our day spent at sea with the Royal Navy had been both enlightening, and great fun.

Joan Fraser



ANOTHER AMERICAN AT OXFORD...

Here I am: yet another American in Oxford. Whenever I walk down the street and hear the harsh tones of an American accent, the sound grates on my ears and makes me wish that I too could have that special British lilt to my speech: the lively up-and-down melody of conversation, the verbal tic of filling pauses with "yeah", or simply the ease of use of idiomatic terms that are wholly foreign to someone who has grown up and gone to university in the United States.

Despite an infinitude of conversations and chats with my British peers at Exeter College, I still feel awkward discussing my "fancies", "reckoning" that my "tute" will be at "half-ten", calling my sneakers "trainers", thanking someone with the casual "Cheers", or pronouncing Evelyn Waugh's last name like a drawn-out "war" without the "r".

Quirks of terminology are fun enough, providing moments of bemusement when I tell someone "nice pants you have on today", or that I am growing out my bangs ("Bangs, what's that???") "Oh," I answer, "I mean fringe."). But then comes the real question: "So, what exactly are you doing here?" English students ask me, soon after noticing my not-so-inconspicuous American accent. While most students seem merely curious, sometimes I am put on the defensive, as if, under severe scrutiny, I must come up with a foolproof logically sound reason for standing on the very ground beneath my feet—what right do you, you American, who has not been hand-picked and sorted into the elite of those who suffer through A-levels and interviews, have, to be here with me, mighty Brit, who has undoubtedly earned his place at Oxford?

Perhaps my own insecurities of my place in Exeter College, holding the somewhat ambiguous position of Undergraduate Visiting Student, shine through in my readiness to put up arms and prove myself against would-be inquisitors. I dutifully explain that this year is part of my BA degree course at Columbia University, though I don't sit exams or receive any formal grades. "So why do you bother to do any work?" people ask. "Does this year count for your degree?"

Honestly, self-motivation (as well as a tutor whom I respect and who will probably send a report on my work back to



Caroline Meckler (left) and Claudia Gorman [1997] in the Fellows Garden

Columbia), is the answer.

Along with all the other Freshers-to-be, last May I received the four-page summer reading list from the English tutors of Exeter College. I read the ambiguous sentence, "we tread a fine line between scaring you to death (about how much you will have to do) and reassuring you that it will be all right," and immediately began to acquire what amounted to an intimidating two-foot high stack of black-spined Penguin Classics.

At the end of September, packing panic set in. Do I have proper protection against the infamous English weather? Will my room in College be in a state of decay, never having been altered since the day it was built sometime in the fourteenth century? I could hardly conceive of being surrounded by stones that had been set in place hundreds of years before there was even a place called the United States of America.

Such were the thoughts of one particular Visiting Student embarking on a year-long journey, which at one time seemed like it would never begin, but now is almost at an end, making me wonder where the time has gone, if time does in fact go anywhere.

Upon stepping off of Turl Street through the heavy wooden doors of Exeter I was immediately confronted with the small

lifestyle changes: the grass is not for walking on, communication is conducted through notes personally delivered to pigeon-holes, a scout daily ensures that my trash-can does not overflow, as is its wont, with banana-peels and paper. Gradually came the larger transformations: I rowed with the college Eight, waking up at 6am for surreal cycle-rides to Godstow; I learned to accept the notion of handing in half-completed weekly essays when the mental struggle to reach a logical conclusion was not going to happen in the hours before tutorial; it became habitual to wear a black gown to three-course dinners served in a dining hall straight out of a medieval fantasy.

But even while I am still here a constant awareness hovers about me of my life in Oxford as being somehow outside of what I do consider my reality—I will not take Mods this year with the other English first-years; during the house-hunting rage I stepped outside and stayed silent. I am a fly-on-the-wall which also has its moments of flight into the central buzz of the room; I am a foreigner, a visitor, who has gotten beyond tour-buses and has been given the privilege to infiltrate, observe and partake in the life of an Oxford student for one year. I will return to New York this summer, changed, with a panoply of experience indelibly imprinted on my memory, surely more folds and used brain cells in my brain.

Sometimes people look back on life and say, "I wish I could do it all over again." Well, that's sort of how I took this year, my second time around as a first-year in college. But this time I "had a laugh" as I confronted the prospect of a pint in the pub and explained to my new English friends that yes, I am another American, yes, I am here for only a year, and yes, I may ask you to translate on occasion; but it still hasn't stopped me from becoming a "boatie", making long-lasting friendships, and all in all having a really fabulous year.

Caroline Meckler

Organ scholar Tansy Castledine assesses the progress of the newly-mixed chapel choir

COLLEGE CHOIR

The last few years have seen plenty of changes in and around the Chapel, most visibly (and audibly!) in the composition of the college choir. Gone are the familiar strains of boys' voices, which have been replaced by women undergraduates singing the soprano and alto parts. Indeed, two of the three new Choral Scholars appointed by the college are sopranos, and we look forward to welcoming each of them at the beginning of Michaelmas Term. The college's decision to award Choral Scholarships to undergraduate members will, in the long term, mean that there will be a total of 12 Choral Scholars of all four voices singing in the choir at any one time.



The advent of women has brought about a whole new sound and social dimension to the choir. These new arrivals have also certainly brought a new challenge to the organ scholars as they adapt their choir-training skills from a style suitable for boys aged between 8 and 13, to a style which must enthuse their peers. Indeed, under the enthusiastic leadership of the organ scholars, and with the support of the College and its old members, we have been presented with a tremendous opportunity to build one of the finest mixed choirs in Oxford, given the splendid surroundings in which we sing - the chapel's marvelous acoustic - and the privilege of being accompanied by the famed two-manual Walker organ, installed in 1994.

The chapel choir maintains the Anglican choral tradition, singing Evensong under the direction of the organ scholars three times every week during term time, incorporating a repertoire which spans across five centuries. The invaluable skills acquired by the organ scholars in such a position are clearly discernible when one scans the musical success of former scholars. Many have gone on to work in some of the country's most prestigious Cathedrals as Organists or Directors of Music, whilst others have put their organ and choir-training skills to good use in various other musical institutions.

It would be misleading to suggest that choir life is limited simply to the chapel. The commitment and enthusiasm shown

by each member of the choir has, over the past two terms, enabled us to participate in a number of inter-collegiate concerts in Oxford, and in a recording of BBC 1's flagship religious broadcast, "Songs of Praise", which was held in the University Church of St. Mary the Virgin.

The high point of the choir's calendar this year was the successful week-long tour to Dublin during the Easter vacation - St. Patrick's week to be exact! Here, the choir sang at both Anglican Cathedrals - Christ Church and St. Patrick's, the Roman Catholic Pro-Cathedral and at Trinity College. We were warmly welcomed at each and were invited to return next year. Certainly the large congregations seemed suitably impressed, as did the Dean of Christ Church - "Definitely the best college choir we've had". A great accolade indeed!

The tour was funded to a large extent by each individual, with kind assistance from the Sub-Rector and by a fund-raising concert given by the choir at the end of Hilary Term in the Chapel of Harrow School - another Gilbert Scott building.

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The Summer Vacation sees the choir touring yet again - this time to Exeter Cathedral, where we will sing the daily office of Evensong during the second week of August. As well as providing the choir with an intensive week of singing, tours also provide a most effective social gel which in choirs is particularly important.

Plans for choir tours in the next academic year are well under way, and already include "away days" to sing Evensong at the Cathedrals at both Norwich and Guildford, and a week in Paris. To celebrate the Millennium the choir will tour to the East Coast of America, singing concerts in New York, Philadelphia and Washington DC, thus increasing the choir's reputation abroad.

This had been a most exciting time in the choir's history, not only because of the change in its physical makeup, but also because of the subsequent interest that has been generated.





ROWING

At the end of May three hundred and fifty Old Members and their families celebrated the 175th anniversary of the founding of the Exeter College Boat Club. John Henstridge [1952-55], President of the Boat Club Association, looks at the past and present of Exeter rowing

While undergraduates sweltered in the Library with Finals approaching, three hundred and fifty Old Members, families and friends packed the College on 31 May to celebrate the 175th anniversary of the founding of the Exeter College Boat Club. 175 years' worth of archives, art and artefacts was displayed in the Stapeldon Room (the Stapeldon Arms as was, for our more senior Old Members), where the Boat Club Association had hosted a press conference the previous day. With a press lunch that day, and a fifty-strong turnout for the annual BCA dinner in the evening, the stage was set for a glorious Saturday of Eights Week.

Exeter College, though small and relatively poor, has been an innovative first on numerous occasions in various fields. The Boat Club provides some splendid examples. Although about the third college to form a Boat Club, Exeter – having got onto the water in 1823 – quickly took a lead in rowing matters. The records start from that date, and the Captain's Books are the oldest continuous record of university rowing anywhere in the world. The first boat was essentially a sea-going whaler, built in Plymouth at the instigation of Henry Moresby. The famous "White Boat" was brought by sea to Southampton, and overland to Oxford, and was highly successful. In 1826 Moresby was a leader in drawing up the first formal rules for University racing. In the same year the second "White Boat" was the subject of the first ever painting of a rowing eight by William Turner of Oxford – the painting, owned by ECBC, was for many years on the College barge, and now hangs in Staircase 4.

Another first in 1846 was the bold decision by the Boat Club to have the first ever keel-less rowing eight built by Clasper of Newcastle. They found it difficult to manage and it was declared

an expensive disaster. Ten years later, however, Mat Taylor laid down for Exeter the first keel-less boat to be built in Oxford, and in it Exeter went head of the river.

The 1850s saw the arrival of William Morris and Burne-Jones at Exeter, and they were clearly not best pleased with what they found. Fiona MacCarthy, William Morris's biographer, writes: "The college divided into two distinct communities: the 'reading men', absorbed in the classics and theology; and the 'fast set', men who rowed, hunted, ate, drank, whored and swore. The fast set at Exeter was then in the ascendant". Things cannot have been too bad, for the Boat Club rules were ferocious: "...anyone who swears or talks indecently, either in or out of the boat during the time he may be down the river shall be fined not exceeding 5s", a substantial sum in those days. Nor were oarsmen unsuccessful academically. E.Finchley-Strawson in a brief article

called 'Brains and Brawn' notes: "The 1852 Blue Boat had at stroke Joseph Chitty, later a Q.C., and famous as the umpire of the only dead-heated Boat Race in 1877: he had taken a first in Greats the year before and was already a Fellow of Exeter. In 1848 and '49 he had also won Cricket Blues".

Throughout most of last century, Exeter was one of the most successful rowing colleges, frequently head of the river and represented in the Blue Boat. The last and most outstanding period was 1882-1884. Exeter went head in '82, with a crew thought to be very modest. The crew went on to Henley and won the Grand Challenge Cup – a remarkable achievement for a small college. The great R.S.Kindersley, a key member of the Exeter crew, scored three winning Blues, and also played rugby for Oxford and England! Although the Boat Club has been near the top several times since, we have not been head of the river since.

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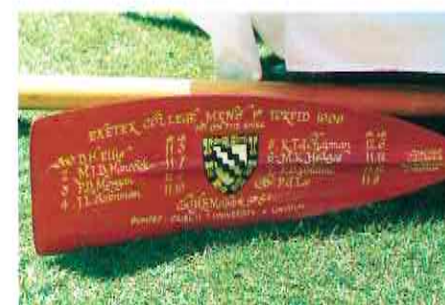
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The 1920s saw more innovation; Exeter was the first Oxford college to invite the legendary but controversial Steve Fairbairn to coach. He had achieved amazing results in Cambridge, especially with Jesus College, and with other clubs such as Thames. Under his influence Exeter became the first College to use swivels instead of fixed rowlocks (i.e. the mechanism which holds to oar in place on the rigger). By 1929 the First Eight reached third place on the river.

Since then, the fortunes of the Club have been up and down, and although well into the first division from time to time,



the headship of the river has eluded Exeter. However, since 1992 there has been a heartening renaissance and the men's first VIII has proved to be the most successful on the river, scoring an average of three bumps a year, and rowing at Henley almost every year, the only Oxbridge college to do so. These achievements have come about through a combination of keen and hard working members of ECBC and the formation of the ECBC Association. The latter has been able to support the club with coaching and finance, and shouting from the bank at bumps races and Henley. We intend that the women's crews will emulate these achievements, with the help of consistent coaching and training – and a new boat! The tremendous efforts of the Boat Club will now, at last, be backed up by generous sponsorship from the Kenan Systems Corporation, which should ensure much needed new boats for both men's and women's first eights. Our sights are now set on achieving the Head of the River in both men's and women's eights!

Stop Press: ECBC competing at Henley reached the third round – the only Oxbridge college to do so – beating two universities on the way. They lost to Imperial College, London, who were finalists. A great achievement for a small college like Exeter, in a borrowed boat, with oarsmen who had all learnt to row at Oxford!

And in the bad old days...

In 1884 Exeter was head of the river for the third year in a row. Sub-Rector Farnell remembered the celebrations.

The public feeling expressed itself mainly in picturesque forms of incendiarism, which reddened the dark sky. The *pièce de resistance* was a large bonfire in the main quadrangle which was then ungrassed: quaint fodder was brought to feed the monster (rumour mentioned a grand piano, whose tone the owner disliked), and the fire-worshippers showed their zeal by dancing round it and leaping through the flames; as the evening went on, this became more and more a heroic feat. Meantime continual volleys of soaring rockets threatened the stars, and in their fall descended, much to my anxiety, on the roofs

of the adjacent Bodleian. The Exonians then living in the house called Exeter Hall at the corner of Ship Street had their own special *diablerie*. Some skilled engineers among them had constructed a bridge of double wires from one of their topmost windows and attached it to the parapet opposite where fellow-revellers attended to it: along this they ran out a flat-bottomed bath full of terrifying combustibles, so that it hung suspended over the Turl fifty feet below: then with well-directed fiery missiles they kindled it, and the effect was on the scale of a volcanic eruption. Unfortunately some of the burning stuff fell into the street, and the citizens who had assembled in crowds to see the spectacle felt themselves aggrieved, and ungratefully broke every window of our college that was affording them so much entertainment gratis. And the police looked on unconcerned. When next day I made a formal complaint about their neglect of duty before the mayor and the police committee, I was informed by the Head of the

city that the police had no power to move on the crowd unless the Riot Act had been first read! Our mayors have markedly improved since then.

I was prevented dealing with this outside show by more arduous duties in college. My chief anxiety was to prevent the burning of anything valuable, and a certain vigilance over the bonfire availed at least to prevent the complete combustion of a Trinity man. ... He found the bonfire deserted for the moment, as the jubilant congregation were called away to some other form of ritual. Fired with a lonely desire for renown, but not being in a state of

fitness for such feats, he ran at the bonfire and sprang; but hitting his foot sharply against something jutting out from it – perhaps the leg of a piano – he fell prone into the middle; and the shock of breaking a bone in his leg, as was afterwards discovered, combined with the fumes of smoke and of his recent potations, kept

...a certain vigilance over the bonfire availed at least to prevent the complete combustion of a Trinity man...

him there unconscious. Fortunately the bonfire had slightly damped down by something ponderous having been thrown on it, and the flames did not immediately reach him. Before they could, some of us observed a pair of boots protruding, and hurriedly pulling at them we discovered that they belonged to the half-singed form of a man, apparently dead. A cold horror fell even on the gayest. We bore him to the nearest bedroom, and I sent out speedy messengers for the nearest doctor. He came quickly and pronounced him not seriously damaged by the flames but suffering from shock and a broken bone...



The 1882 crew, head of the river in Oxford, and Grand Challenge winners at Henley