

"ARE YOU READY? GO!" High twenty, settle it.....I didn't look left or right: "Get ahead and you will control the race" - coach's words ringing in my ears.

After we settled I looked to see where we stood. But where were UCD? I glanced over my shoulder and still didn't see them. My throat went dry and an eerie sensation pulsed through my body. We were down - two lengths down. College had got off to a very fast start which caught us by surprise. No one was cheering for us - all I could hear was "Come on College; you've got them". All our training seemed wasted. But we didn't give in. We kept at 38 and pushed. Cox shouted "We're gaining! Ready for a lift - High twenty". The rate jumped to 42 and we began to move on them. By the third bridge we were one length down. "We're catching them" I thought as we passed Capel Street bridge. I glanced over my shoulder again and Ben said calmly - "We have them". By the Halfpenny Bridge we were half a length up and pulling away. We won by two lengths.

Last season saw another year of good progress and consolidation for the club, although lacking the end-of-season successes of the year before. A twenty-strong group of senior and junior oarsmen produced two hard-working Vllls for the head season, the better of which brought home the Senior A pennants from St. Michael's, New Ross Marathon, Galway and Dublin Head of the River races. This solid winter period culminated in the regaining of the Gannon Cup after three years of foreign custody. It was a remarkable exhibition of experienced and controlled rowing and a thorough vindication of our winter training programme.

The regatta season recorded wins at UCC in Elite Coxless Pairs, at Trinity in

Novice Vllls and IVs, and Senior B IVs (where in a spirited final the Trinity lightweights beat the heavies by a length), and in the Senior B Vllls at Metro and Athlone. Indecision as to the composition of the Senior VIII cost the club dearly at Henley, and no wins were forthcoming at the Championships in Blessington, despite good performances at Senior and Intermediate levels.

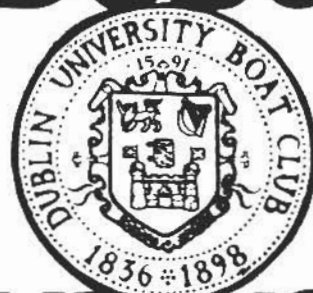
In general the standard of rowing was maintained at a good level, building on the achievements of the previous year, and increasing the number of oarsmen and developing the considerable potential among the younger members of the club. Two major achievements were the acquisition of a superb new Empacher VIII, designed to last as a first-class racing boat for the next six or seven years, and the purchase of a share in Blessington

boathouse which enables the club to use the reservoir much more easily and more frequently for training, as well as providing greater security, and changing facilities. The benefits of this latter development have already been exploited to a considerable degree. Many thanks are due to our solicitor Randall Plunkett, ex DUBC, for much hard work on our behalf in this matter.

The cost of these two ventures was a staggering £30,000, by far the largest financial undertaking ever made by the club. We are extremely grateful to DUCAC who provided a most generous grant covering two-thirds of the total cost, and also to you, our past members and friends, whose moral support and financial assistance through the Equipment Fund Appeal are invaluable.

Peter Keenan
(race commentary) and Lewis Purser

DUBC



NEWS

23 TRINITY COLLEGE DUBLIN
JUNE 1987 - FEBRUARY 1989

TRUE COLOURS

After a good run in Henley and a solid row in the Champs the Senior VIII was selected to represent Ireland in the Home International in Wales. And so, with mixed emotions of trepidation and excitement mingled with a sense of honour, the crew assembled in the Alexandra Basin ferryport where green singlets were handed out. Most of us looked briefly at the Shamrock vest before nonchalantly packing away our new top. No words were exchanged, no eyes lit up: it wouldn't do to look too impressed. Arrived at the hotel, crews were split into twos, and in the privacy of their rooms oarsmen ripped open plastic bags to unfold their new colours. There, mere mortals were transformed into internationals as oarsmen checked out their new front profile, side profile and pirouette.

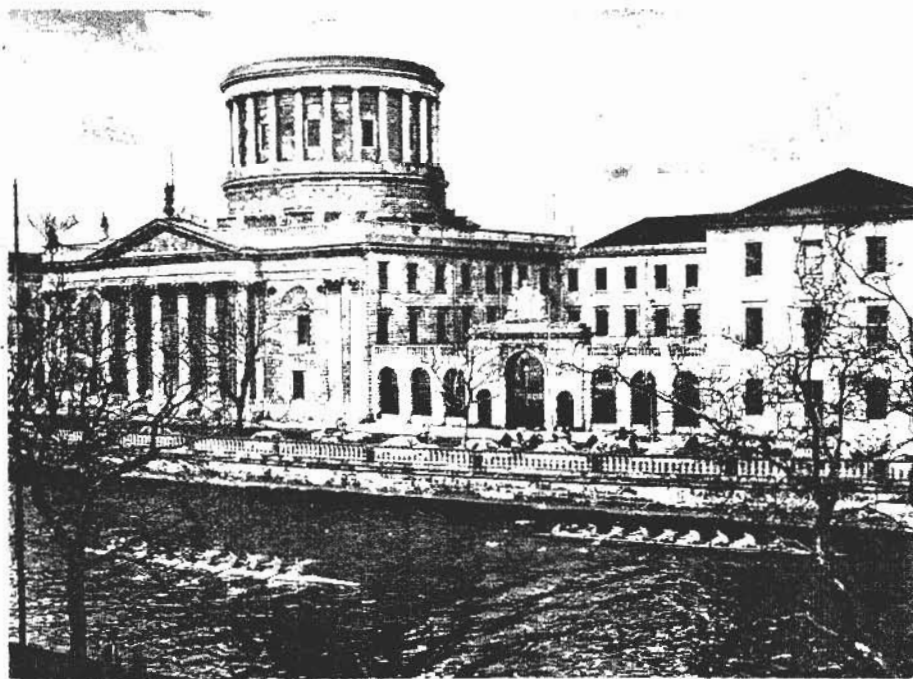
Training was a bit difficult, as it proved hard to adjust to rowing with green blades rather than normal white ones with black chevrons. As we left the slip for the race, there was an unusual sense of relaxation in the boat. This race was not something to be afraid of: it had been a good season and this was to be the icing on the cake - the last time the unit would row together, something to be enjoyed. Coming up to the 1000m, Tideway Scullers for England made the decisive move with a committed burn which put them two lengths into the lead; and although Trinity pushed, we could not close this distance. Meanwhile Scotland battled hard to stay in touch, and finished a further 1.5 lengths down, 2 lengths ahead of Wales.

With the regatta completed the crews returned to the hospitality of the Welsh Rowing Union's dinner and dance where, after the consumption of many pints of bitter, thick-thighed British oarswomen were changed into Greek goddesses before the very eyes of these athletes. . . . Well, for the duration of the slow set at least.

FOOTNOTE

Three members of the 1981 National Championship and Home International winning crew played an active part in this regatta: Brendan Flynn coached the Irish VIII; Gerry Macken represented Ireland in the coxless pairs and won; and Sean Tunney was in the victorious Tideway VIII for England.

GANNON REGAINED



Passing the Four Courts and still a length down, but catching up fast, the crew was (from the bows) Johnston, Hanrahan, Burgess, Coulter, Dunne, Keenan, Spratt, Hurley, and cox Liz Taylor

THE YEAR THAT'S IN IT

News on the rowing front and prospects for the year are probably the two most sought after information items concerning our club. Invariably when one meets an old member little time elapses before the crucial questions are popped: "How is the VIII going?" and "What are the aims?" The replies tend to be highly variable on the medium-term basis, as the membership turnover experienced by any university club lends a comparatively large amount of instability between each year's prospects. However, this year I am glad to say that the change is for the better, as the solid base laid for improvement by last year's Captain, Lewis W.J. Purser Esq. and close co-operation with Lady Lizzie have increased our prospects dramatically.

The year began, as it usually does with a certain sense of inevitability, on the first day of the second week of October, 1988. The troops were rallied, briefed, and sent in to do battle with some 700 prospective new members as Freshers walked through the cluttered Front Square of Trinity in search of their careers. For the first couple of days, sturdy-looking characters were enticed, invited, asked, told or bullied into joining the club to experience the joys of simply 'messing about in boats'. However, membership was reaching such a level in the later days of the week that it nearly became a case of 'By Invitation Only'. We emerged at the end of the campaign with little short of 170 new members. The only problem facing us was what to do with all these bodies. It being vitally important to maintain interest in the ranks, a programme of introductory events was laid on: learning about boats, the stroke, erging, watching videos, and tea and biscuits. The effort involved has shown its merit in that for many weeks boat shortage was a problem, with upwards of four novice Vllls launching each Saturday and Sunday. Pressure eased slightly as the weeks went by, and those less sturdy in mind or body opted out of the rowing scene.

Again due to Lewis Purser's encouragement last year, the majority of the previous year's novices and seniors returned to the club, to provide a broad spectrum of talent ranging from novice to senior A status. The main difficulty at the beginning of the year was the containment of everyone's enthusiasm. Shortly after the Club AGM a general meeting of all active oarsmen and coxswains was held to lecture on training, select squads, and discuss our aims. We estimated our potential as a club as being higher than practically any other

club in the country; as, with a strong force of novices, a good bunch of juniors, and a hopeful squad of seniors, we might just have a chance at all three pots at the National Champs. That was, and currently still is, our aim.

None of this will be achieved without adequate coaching and equipment. We are fortunate on the coaching front to have a plethora of bodies available part-time (more are always welcome), and extra-fortunate in having a fully-committed full-time coach by the name of Martin Breen, former UCG Captain and latterly coach of UCC: Due to work re-location Martin is now in Dublin and fitting into the club as well as any old member. Providing invaluable assistance on a part-time basis are Andy Hogan, Phil Browne and Brendan Flynn. Jim Murnane's

powerful control of, and close involvement with the novices for the first term has left them in a strong position. On the equipment front the club is hoping to purchase equipment to the tune of £9, . . . (captain whistles nonchalantly- ed) half of which will be funded by DUCAC, the other half of which we must raise ourselves.

I briefly mentioned above our aims for the year, and shall now expand on them in the light of recent developments and forthcoming events. Unfortunately St Michael's Head of the River on 3rd December last was blown and washed out producing inconclusive or no results. We had hoped to get a good comparison between the quality of our juniors and the country's other top intermediate crews who were scheduled to race in the event. However, the cancellation of the Head put paid to that idea so.....



New Ross Head (above) which was also blown out. The Captain therefore has nothing further to add.

SCULLING

In recent years the club has seen a healthy increase in the number of scullers taking to the water, both for fun and in earnest. Inspired by the victory of Nick Mahony in the Novice Sculls Championship in 1986, sculling has gone from strength to strength.

During the year upwards of a dozen scullers were regularly on the water, and the club fielded singles in Galway Head, and in Metropolitan, Athlone, Carlow and the National Championship Regattas, the contenders being variously Ben Hurley (Captain 1989), Len Dunne (Captain 1987), Edward Davis, and the editor. No victory was recorded in any event, but the standard was commendable in view of the lack of coaching. Your editor was stunned to reach the final of the novice sculls in Carlow, where he was beaten after a protracted tussle with the undergrowth; and was hurt and upset to discover in Blessington that rough water did not really agree with his delicate sensitivities. At the Dublin Sculling Ladder time trials in October two Trinity scullers finished in the top ten places: Ben seventh; and Edward -putting in a show of strength worthy of his 15-stone bulk- third. Edward thus seems likely to top the club's own

Ladder in June when the 'Pineapple Pot' is presented. This cup, recovered last year, was presented to DUBC in 1930 by Miss Fox Pym whose brother, Major C.V. Fox, won the cup in 1901 in the Diamond Sculls in Henley. Since 1930 it has had many distinguished holders; but the practice of presenting it to the Club Sculler lapsed from 1974 until 1988 when it was presented to Ben Hurley.

We hope that this interest in sculling will continue to flourish now that the Presidency of the Club is held by no less a sculler than Rob Van Mesdag.



Pearse Coyle (Vice-Captain 1988) samples the pleasures. But are those The Ladies' blades?



"Give that back." We regret that the practice of baiting Ben Hurley (2nd from right) has lapsed of late.

SOME MEMORIES AND REFLECTIONS ON MY PRESIDENTIAL YEARS

The Club did me a very great honour when they chose me as President a few years ago, and I must record that I have enjoyed to the full every minute of the time that I served in this capacity.

It would be impossible to comment upon all that took place during my tenure of office, but there are a few highlights that will always remain with me, and which it was my special privilege to share with the Club:

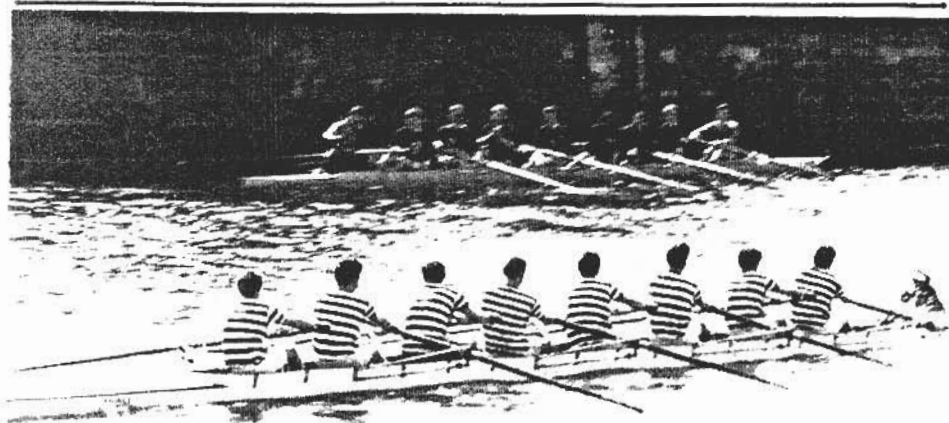
First and foremost of course the Sesqui-Centenary year, with all the activity and planning, building up firstly towards the colourful pageantry of the great banquet in the Dining Hall; it was awe-inspiring for me to realise that 50 years ago in the same place I was celebrating the Centenary banquet of the Club, but perhaps, at that time, in a more inebriated state! Then of course there was the Sesqui Regatta, when "all the stops were pulled out" and which proved to be an outstanding success, at which the Cambridge University crew competed, making their colourful presence felt. It was most pleasing to be able to offer them and many of our own older members some small hospitality at my home on the Saturday evening of the Regatta, and one also remembers with gratitude an excellent fork supper given on the Sunday night by Dr. and Mrs. Rees to many of the senior members of the Club, a thankfully relaxing function after all the hard work!

During this year and in the next two years to come, I was conscious of all the very hard work put in on the river, and in training generally by all the members of the various crews, and the dedication of their coaches - there is no doubt that if fitness alone could have produced unbeaten results, we would have had them, for I have seldom seen so much hard work being put in. As it was, there were highlights such as Henley 1987, which I regrettably was not able to attend, and also at Blessington that year, when the VIII was chosen to represent Ireland in the Quadrangular Championships. Although the years of my Presidency did not seem to produce very much by way of first class results, yet the Club was very much to be reckoned with in any regatta in which it competed, and some solid achievements were recorded.

It was very gratifying, during this period, to follow the course of events which led to the Club's involvement in the Blessington Boathouse project. To me, participation in this seemed to be vital for the future performance of our crews, with the waters at Islandbridge becoming more and more overcrowded each year, with resulting insuperable obstacles for coaches and oarsmen alike. It was most pleasing and indeed a tremendous relief to see the way in which the officers of the Club put their minds to this problem, and by a series of meetings backed by some of the older members, who were able to convince DUCAC of the importance of this issue, managed to bring affairs to a successful conclusion. I feel that this is one of the most important steps the Club has taken since I first joined in 1935 and I know that it will pay dividends in the future.

Being President brought me back into the life of the Boat Club again after having been rather a drop-out for a good many years. Once back, I was most impressed by several things, such as the wish and the fondness shown on all sides for the traditions of the Club, culminating in functions such as Trial Vills and special regattas or celebrations generally. I was impressed by the spirit of co-operation and dedication displayed by various special committees, especially during the Sesqui year, when so much was done to restore and brighten up the Club premises, and to ensure that the special functions of that year were in keeping with the history and traditions of the Club. Quite apart from the wonderful support and co-operation one received from all quarters at all times, one was made to feel "wanted", that one belonged again, which gave one a tremendous feeling of warmth towards the Club. Having learned my lesson from this unique experience, may I say how important I feel it is for more of the older members to become more deeply involved with the Club and its activities, over and above "putting their hands in their pocket", which many of them do anyway, bless them. I never have felt more certain than I do now about the continuing progress and success of the Club in the future, and I will end by saying again that I wouldn't have missed the honour of being President for anything in the world.

Bill Millar



TAKING IT HOME: UCD are out of the picture as the 1988 Gannon crew lifts it for O'Connell Bridge, cheered on by the victorious novice crew heading upstream to the boathouse and a pair of dry socks.

HENLEY FUND 1987/88 A NOTE FROM THE TRUSTEES

The season 1987/1988 was alas a disappointing one for the Henley Fund as both the income to the Fund by way of subscriptions, and the number of subscribers fell away sharply. There is no doubt, however, that this unfortunate picture was very largely due to the fact that the Henley Fund Appeal letters were sent out so late; indeed they only reached their intended destinations a considerable time after Henley was over and so provided what amounted to an anticlimax.

Nevertheless, the Trustees of the Fund are happy to report that the Fund itself is still in a reasonably healthy condition, thanks mainly to the usual "hard core" of our regular supporters who are unbelievably generous and never let us down, year after year, come what may. Thus, during the year, we were able to advance the sum of £1200, drawing partly on our resources in the Bank of Ireland towards the crew's expenses at Henley.

The Trustees are also pleased to report that they were in a position to advance the sum of £2000 from reserves towards the Blessington Boathouse project, when DUBC had to produce £15000 in all to "buy in" there. This £2000 was in the form of an interest free loan, and will be repaid over four years in £500 instalments.

Finally, we understand that this year the Henley Fund and the Equipment Appeals will be combined in one letter. This is being tried out because it is genuinely felt that our long suffering supporters are being bombarded by altogether too many letters at times. We hope it will work successfully and don't forget that there is much need to make up last year's deficit, and we count on the support of all to lay a good foundation financially to what looks like being a very promising season.

CHAMPIONSHIP RECORDS

As you know, DUBC has produced more Senior Champions than any other club in Ireland. Micheal Johnston, member of LEBC and former President of the IARU, is at present working on a history of the Senior Pot. Many of you have already heard from him, and have sent him material.

But there are two things he particularly still wants: photographs of Championship-winning crews - 1st choice of the race itself; 2nd choice, an informal picture of the crew on or off the water; thirdly, the crew winning another race the same year. He has access at least to formal crew pictures of all the Trinity winners, but much fewer racing pictures or good informal shots.

The second thing he wants is a photocopy of contemporary newscuttings of Championship races - if possible with the paper and its date identified. Any contemporary accounts from 1925-1953 would be welcome.

Trinity's 22 victories were 1922, 1925, 1926, 1932, 1933, 1935, 1936, 1937, 1938, 1941, 1942, 1943, 1944, 1945, 1946 (six in a row), 1949, 1950, 1954, 1958, 1967, 1976 and 1981. He'd particularly welcome action or informal shots of the crews of the twenties and thirties. For 1922 and 1938 even the formal of the Championship crews would be useful - he only has the nearest Henley crew, with some changes of personnel.

Any material please to No. 23, or direct to Micheal Johnston at 20 Burdett Avenue, Sandycove, Co. Dublin; original material will be returned.

OBITUARY

IAN, JACKO, and BERTHA WILSON

It is with great sadness that we record the deaths of Ian, Jacko, and Bertha Wilson during the last year.

Many will recall the outstanding contribution of Ian and Jacko to DUBC's rowing in the 1946/47 years. Ian rowed on the Ladies Plate finalist VIII in 1946, when he was Club Captain, and was a member of the Irish Championship IV of 1947 (with Alan Hanna, Alan Browne, and Ray Wiley).

Jacko's wife, Bertha, nee Winters, was one of two sisters who made an enormous contribution to Carrick-on-Shannon rowing over the same period, and captained the Ladies' Rowing Club at that time.

Latterly, Ian had lived with his wife and

family in Banff, Alberta, Canada. He was a well respected surgeon in Banff General Hospital, and very involved in the community there. He had been ill for about a year and died in early March. Jacko and Bertha had been living and working in London, and had been regular and very popular visitors to Henley over the past years. News of Bertha's death came as a sad blow when she died suddenly in September following surgery; and within a month, in October, Jacko had followed her. Jacko had latterly been teaching in a school for disadvantaged children in London, work at which he excelled.

Their parting is the closing of a little chapter of history. They were most memorable people. Our deepest sympathy is extended to Ian's wife, Priscilla, and their children, and to all of their relatives and friends.

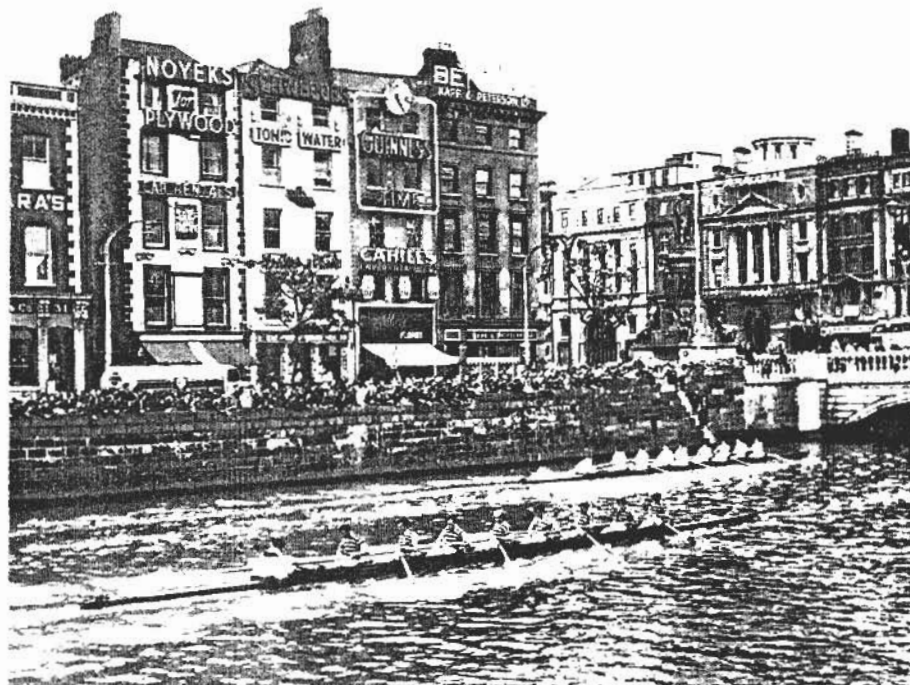
BUSINESS IN BELGIUM

"Remarkably good quality, but is the resistance factor sufficient for a sculler of your strength?" Thus commented Lizzy member, Dr. R. B. McDowell, Emeritus Fellow of Trinity College, Dublin, when DUBC vice-president Rob van Mesdag showed the doctor his new Italian-made carbon fibre sculls. Their conversation took place at the *Cercle des Regates*, Rob's rowing club in Brussels, soon after Dr. McDowell's arrival in that city last August. When invited to try out these sculls, the doctor declined, accepting instead an invitation from Stanislas Fonteyn, the *Cercle's* vice-president, and former committee member of the International Rowing Federation, FISA, to a fine glass of Belgian beer.

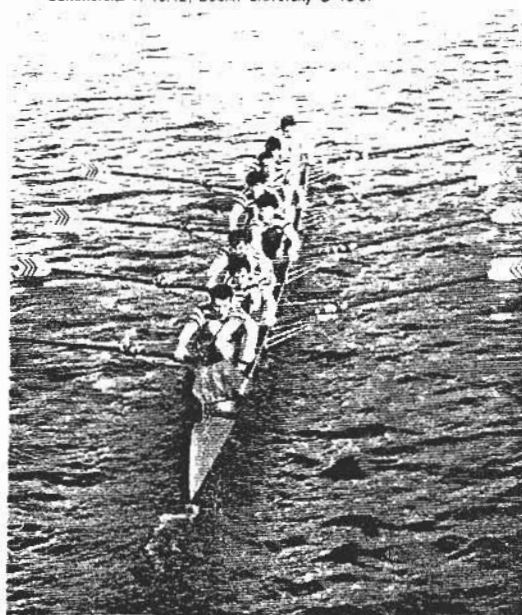
Dr. McDowell's visit continued its maritime flavour when van Mesdag took him to the port of Antwerp in the north and the hydraulic lifts for canal barges in the centre of the country; while in Antwerp the pair met up with Lizzy member Gilles Thal Larsen and his wife Anne, who live in Holland, nearby, to eat maritime food: mussels. The doctor's visit reached its climax when he - no longer so young - climbed the Butte de Lion, the 30 metre high monument on the site of the Battle of Waterloo. The headquarters of Napoleon, and monuments commemorating the dead from various nations were also visited.

When Dr. McDowell asked to be driven to the site of the battle at Gemappe, van Mesdag took him by mistake to Jemeppe, a few miles further on. On entering this small town, the doctor recognised its nameplate immediately. It was where the French had fought the Belgians following the French Revolution 10 years earlier. Van Mesdag tried to attribute his mistake to the doctor's poor Flemish pronunciation, but Dr. McDowell replied: "That's curious ... both towns lying in Wallonie (southern Belgium). I was speaking French!"

LATE NEWS - DUBLIN HEAD 11/3/89 Top 12 Neptune A 11m 1s; Dublin University B 11:29; Dublin University A 11:33; UCD A 11:48; Neptune B 11:55; Commercial B 11:57; Dublin University C 12:33; Neptune C 12:38; Lady Elizabeth 12:43; UCD B 12:50; Commercial A 13:12; Dublin University D 13:57



GANNON CUP: You win some, you lose some. This one (1960) we lost. 1949 (below) was a dead-heat. The crew was Keays, Slavin, Clark, McKee, Orr, Murray-Alston, Strain, Tamplin, and cox, Ward.



The Senior crew at Dublin Head this year - Andrews, Spratt, Burgess, Keenan, Dunne, Hurley, Pattison, Hanrahan, and cox, Taylor.

GUESTS OF THE CAIRO POLICE

"TRINITY GO BOATING ON THE NILE" was the banner headline on the 1977 newsletter, complete with article, photograph and Provost. The 1987 expedition was, by comparison, a low key affair: in fact, for those who did not travel, the most lasting memento of the trip will probably be the artistic patterns drawn on the ceiling of No. 23 with a noteworthy punch. In keeping with this low-key spirit, Commandant Dick Hanrahan of the Munster Command submitted his terse report to the current editor's predecessor shortly before going on the run. He is believed currently to be in hiding in the Castleconnell area; and we are assured that rumours of his assassination are entirely groundless.

"Christmas 1987, a crack commando unit, consisting of 5 of DUBC's toughest, meanest, and fittest seniors embarked for Egypt. Their aim - to do their duty for club and clubmen. Four and a half worn, bruised and weather-beaten men returned with yet another successful mission completed. DUBC once again showed them all how it is done.

"Day 1 - Morale is low. The natives are restless. Teams from the US, Bulgaria, Britain, Belgium, Germany and Egypt (mostly national squads) are to provide the opposition.

"Day 2 - Met the English pair, Holmes and Redgrave. Morale sinking rapidly.

"Day 3 - The lads from the Cairo Police Rowing Club didn't appreciate the verse about the Sphinx and the Camel. International incident narrowly avoided. Morale rock-bottom.

"Day 4 - The Sphinx is definitely embedded but there is a possibility. Morale rising.

"Day 5 - Saw a one-legged man hop across a crowded motorway: makes you think. Accosted Steve Redgrave's wife in hotel swimming-pool. Morale in danger.

"Day 6 - Other squads suffering from bowel disorders. Doctor's patent *aqua vitae* still working.

"Day 7 - On first-name terms with Steve and Andy. Morale is high.

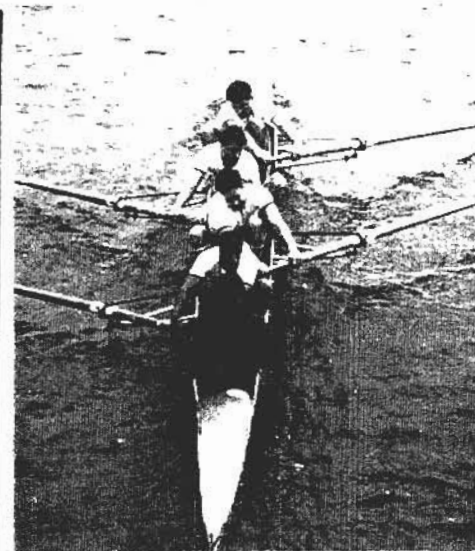
"Day 8 - Back in Cairo and won our last race after teaming up with one of the Belgians: drank the bar at the Sheraton Hotel dry (quite literally!) and made it to the Hotel Sharanadze just in time to order a few more beers.

The DUBC coxless 5 was composed of the Team Historian and Cultural Attache, B. Flynn, who guided us through many ancient



Spot the DUBC men on this pyramid

tombs (including the labyrinth at the Hotel el Nil); the Team Geologist, Dr. N. McManus, who tried unsuccessfully to remove half the mineral deposits of the Valley of the Kings in his rucksack; L Purser, Team Captain and 'Hands-Across-The-Water' Co-ordinator, who was looking for lost civilisations in the most unlikely places; L Johnston, Medical Officer, who forced the crew to drink gallons of Black Bush every day to ward off the infamous 'gyppy tummy'; and Head Coach, D Hanrahan, whose main worry during our training session(s) was dodging the banana boats



Some of last season's Novices: B: Huson,

2: Boag, 3: Holmes, Stk: Cruise O'Brien, Cox: Cahill

Congratulations to KEVIN LYNCH of 1981 vintage, who was a member of the victorious Lea Rowing Club IV that won the Britannia Cup at Henley in 1987, and in 1988 were beaten in the final by University of London. Also to SEAN TUNNEY, who with Tideway Scullers was a finalist in the Ladies Plate in 1987. Sean is now back in Dublin and is setting up a dental practice in Dublin 4. Both he and GERRY MACKEN have recently been active on the international bobsleigh circuit, with many considering them unlucky not to have been selected for the 1988 Winter Olympics.

OUT AND ABOUT

The engagement of GERRY MACKEN to Sarah-Jane Hogan gave due cause for celebration on it's announcement last year. Sarah-Jane is the sister of ANDREW HOGAN (DUBC '80-'83), and an enthusiastic member of the Ladies' Committee. We wish them both all the very best in the future.

Also on the matrimonial front, ALAN THOMAS is engaged to Pauline Ryan, and rumour has it that they are to be married in September. Best wishes again to both.

Congratulations also to Mark and Denise PATTISON, married last year, on the recent birth of a son; and to boatman Bernard Murphy and wife Geraldine, a son too.

Perhaps the organisers of the Dublin City Marathon should consider opening a special 'Oarsman's Category', given the number of DUBC men, both past and present, who took part in October 1988. Those spotted along the 26-odd miles included BRENDAN FLYNN, RAYMOND BLAKE, JOHN AIKEN, EDWARD SPRATT, JOHN CAIRD, MARTIN BREEN and AIDAN MacMAHON.

Welcome back to Dublin for Mike and Liz RYDER, from the frozen wastes of County Down.

News has filtered through of several past Captains of DUBC. IAN HUNTER (1968), now of Muranderos, Zimbabwe, has got a IV together and at last sighting was training hard for a European Tour, to include Henley '89. NICK DUNLOP ('81) is now within spitting distance upstream of Henley, teaching and coaching at Shiplake College. BRIAN ROBERTS ('85) has returned from his Australian adventures, complete with a beard, and is now working in Ireland as a marketing manager. NICK MAHONY ('87) has become a Naval doctor with the Royal Marines, and is currently based in Plymouth. He is also rowing with Tideway Scullers.



The Egypt squad relax for a while. It is difficult to perceive from their nonchalant appearance the sheer dedication and determination with which they pursued their objectives.



"Now hold on a minute". Club stalwarts Martin Coulter (objecting) and Michael Burgess (worrying) at Trinity Regatta.



Fundamental Breach of Tradition (and all the better for it): all these people are members

BY WAY OF APOLOGY

By now the more perceptive among you will probably have noticed that there has been no newsletter since 1987. When I asked the appointed editor for 1988 to write an explanation for this absence, I mistakenly termed the piece an 'apology', at which stage he became extremely annoyed, said it was not his fault, nobody would write any articles, countless hours spent chasing people up, and so on. Having worked on this newsletter since last October, I am forced to acknowledge his point, and I unreservedly withdraw any critical remarks made. The truth, I have reluctantly come to realise, is that when it comes to literary endeavour the average oarsman is slothful, indolent and lazy. He also suffers from a degree of illiteracy and lack of artistic flair (subject to a few valiant exceptions) generally only to be expected from those who have been hit on the head with a very heavy weight indeed.

This is, after all, a boat club; our chosen pursuit is rowing; and our aim is excellence. We see no reason to strive for literary achievement; we merely want to move a boat faster. As to this, the club has been doing well since the last newsletter was published. Our Senior VIII recovered from a poor regatta season in 1987 to reach the semi-finals of the Thames Cup at Henley, and was chosen to represent Ireland in the Home Internationals; in 1988 they recaptured the Gannon Cup; and this year, barring divine intervention, they hope to wrest the Senior Championship from the holders UCG. The 1988 novice crew broke status at Trinity Regatta, and are all back this year; while the 1987 novices, after a tremendous regatta season and all in their first year's rowing, brought the double home with them from the National Championships. Needless to say the sole purpose of rowing is enjoyment, and at this the club is maintaining a tradition of the highest standard. Indeed, even in the ignominy and shame of defeat the members have shown their desire to fill their capacity for innocent enjoyment to the full. Although the rigours of winter training may dampen the enthusiasm, it would nonetheless be true to say that the club is in a healthy state.

This is what I have tried to show in this newsletter. Those in search of literary excellence will, I fear, have to resort to the pages of *The Irish Times*. But for those who are prepared to endure the coarseness of style, the rough unpolished phrase, and the syntactical errata, this magazine will furnish some account of victory and defeat, of hope and disappointment, of weir-shots and accidents, and of travels and revelry. We are, after all, a boat club.

The Editor

SPARE PAIR

Crashing just prior to the qualifying race for the Visitors in Henley, and then missing qualification in another boat borrowed at short notice is a fairly depressing thing, particularly if two of your four are in the eight, and so there is no prospect even of training rows during the next week. So here we were, contemplating where to start drinking the town dry (London, that is - think big!), when there appeared in the boat tents a notice about a Spare Pairs race. Well, we felt like a couple of spare Where was I? Oh yes: so we said "what the hell", and stuck down our names and sat back to see what happened.

This event is organised (we found out later) every year by one of the Cambridge colleges - this year it was Trinity Hall - with the blessing, apparently, of Henley Royal Regatta.

Anyway, on Monday a draw was posted, and Tuesday morning saw us begging/borrowing/stealing a boat from UCC about fifteen minutes before our race. The draw said we had a bye into the second round, and so the thought of racing a crew that had actually beaten someone was a little daunting. But we hopped in the boat and paddled up to Fawley, just doing a couple of practice starts on the way, as we did not want to be late. We were starting to think that it was an elaborate (and unfunny) practical joke, when someone on a bike appeared (only about fifteen minutes late), and asked if we had seen our opposition. As we had not, we just practised our start again and rowed over.

About an hour later it was time for our next race - the semi-final. We still had not seen what any of the other crews was like,

and had been told by the organisers that we were up against the hot favourites, Trinity Hall. Ah well, we said, and hopped back into the boat to go back to the start. A few practise starts (you see, starts were the only warm-up we could agree on - we thought they were important, and we were quite good at them), and we discussed our race tactics. The start and off we went! The other crew jumped the start, but were disappointed to see we'd jumped it even better. Any worries soon abated: we took a length quickly and finished comfortably ahead. We had just time to put the boat away, and then watch the other semi. A very slick Molesey crew won it easily, and all our new-found confidence evaporated.

After lunch, we reappeared for the late-afternoon final (prime-time viewing), and paddled up to meet Molesey, who had obviously heard of our reputation because both crews began the race on the "Are you ready?" After twenty strokes we had made a canvas, which we pushed to half a length....they burned....we burned....settled....held them....still only at the mile-post....at the hole-in-the-wall it was only a canvas....the spectators were going wild (both of them)....at the mile-and-one-eighth post they were level or maybe had even a foot....we dug deep (figure of speech)....and at the mile-and-one-quarter we had a few feet....they went for the line....we went for the line....the rate went through the roof....we passed the progress boards....

The verdict was two feet in our favour. For our sins we got tankards, and Peter Coni assured me that there is even a trophy - a silver rose-bowl - but we never saw it because it is used by him as an ash-tray in the Chairman's Office during the regatta.

Luke Johnston



The indomitable Purser and Johnston take on Commercial's Phelan and McGuinness on the Liffey

THE SONG OF THE UNHAPPY HOUSE-&-GROUNDS SECRETARY

(With due apologies to Messrs Gilbert and Sullivan, and to all the policemen and pirates of Penzance.)

When an oarsman's not engaged in his employment	When the enterprising junior isn't erging
his employment	isn't erging
Or studying for his forthcoming exams	When the Captain isn't rowing out of time
'ming exams	out of time
His capacity for ranting and enjoyment	He loves to take his lady-friend out walking
and enjoyment	friend out walking
Is twice as great as any lesser man's	Or to plagiarise an operatic rhyme
lesser man's.	'ratic rhyme
Our feelings we with difficulty smother	There is no fine occupation he would rather
'culty smother	he would rather
When appointment to bar duty must be done	Than to come down stocious, paralysed with rum
must be done	'lysed with rum
Ah take one consideration with another	Ah take one consideration with another
with another	with another
A poor Groundsman's lot is not a happy one	A poor Groundsman's lot is not a happy one
happy one.	happy one