



Trinity College, Dublin's first rowing trip to the United States of America.

The Trinity crew arrived onboard the Cunard steamer Scythia at Jersey City Wharf at 7 p.m. on the evening of 1 August, 1876. They came to represent Ireland and Trinity College in the International Rowing Races at Philadelphia, at the first Great World's Fair. The International Regatta was staged to mark the centenary of the American Declaration of Independence and will be rowed between crews from USA, England and Ireland.

From the Irish Times:

"The International Rowing Regatta Programme reads as follows:"

"An International Rowing Regatta, under the auspices of the United States Centennial Commission, will take place on the Schuylkill River (a tributary of the Delaware), in view of the grounds of the International Exhibition, between the 29th of August and the 15th September, 1876. Entries will be closed on July the 15th. The Races supervised by the Centennial Commission, will be under the local management of the Schuylkill Navy, a boating organisation composed of nine clubs, whose boathouses are on the east bank of the River Schuylkill, within Fairmount Park. The association will furnish quarters for the boats of visiting crews. The committee in charge have made the following arrangements:-

First- An International race, open to all regularly organised boat clubs throughout the World, to be rowed in accordance with the rules of the National Amateur Rowing Association of the United States.

The prizes to be:- A piece of plate each, for fours, for pairs, for double and single sculls, and in addition medals, to be presented to each man rowing in the race, to be of gold for the winning crew, for the second crew of silver, and for the remainder, of bronze. "

"The piece of plate offered for the fours is the Big Cup of the regatta."

"Second- An International College race, for four oared shells (our first-class boats), will be held, the prize to be a piece of plate, with a gold medal, to each member of the winning crew, open only to undergraduates."

"Third- An International Graduates' Race will be held for four oared shells, open to graduates of universities or colleges; the prize being a piece of plate, and a gold medal to each member of the winning crew."

“Fourth- Professional Races will be held open to all crews throughout the World, for four-oared, pair-oared, and single scull shells, for suitable purses, the amounts of which will be announced by May 1st.”

“The Amateur Races will be rowed in heats, one and a half miles straight away. The professional races will be rowed three miles, one and a half mile and return. In addition to the above named prizes the United States Centennial Commission will award the diploma and medal of the Commission to the several victors.”

“The Committee of Management is constituted as follows:- Chairman, His excellency J.F.Hartruit, Governor of Pennsylvania. Vice-Chairman – His Honor W.S.Stokley, Mayor of Philadelphia. Committee – Professor J.R. Leslie, Dublin University Boat Club; J.R. Craft, Argonauta Rowing Club, New Jersey; W.F. Garner, Vice-Commodore, New York Yacht Club; Colonel Crosby, New York York Yacht Club, General Burd Grubb, Philadelphia. “

“We are not only pleased, but proud, to see the name of one of our own well known supporters of rowing in this country, on the list of the distinguished committee. It is not a mere honorary title. Professor Leslie’s practical knowledge of rowing – as well as all matters pertaining to the management of regattas – has, we have no doubt, influenced the Centennial Commission in placing him on the list of the committee as the representative of the British Isles.” (Indeed The Rev. J.R. Leslie was in the chair at the first meeting of the DUBC that was held to elect the first Captain, George Atkins.)

Early in the year, as reported in the Irish Times of February 19, 1876, a crew got up by private enterprise intended going, constituted as follows:-

G.H. Pentland U.B.C. (bow)

G. Hickson U.R.C

C.B. Barrington U.B.C.

Croker Barrington U.B.C (stroke)

(U.B.C. and U.R.C. were used instead of our familiar D.U.B.C and D.U.R.C, there being only one University then in Dublin) All four gentlemen being graduates of Trinity were representing Trinity in the International Race and the Graduates Race.

The paper goes on to report that the crew was “a formidable looking one both on paper and in the boat – all are well known on Irish waters to be A1 oarsmen. Bow was Champion Sculler of Ireland for three years. No. 2 has been stroke of the University Rowing Club First Four for the past two years; it would be hard to find a better man. No. 3 and stroke have been together in almost every race in Ireland for the past five years and also have held their own against the best oars of Oxford and Cambridge on the Thames, scoring many a wing for the University Boat Club. The crew rows under the name of the “Lady Elizabeth Boat Club.” A lighter crew would be more to our taste for the course which the International Committee have laid down – a mile and a quarter, the above being a rather heavy crew, averaging over twelve stone. We have also heard that the Committee of the Dublin University Boat Club have under consideration the calling of a general meeting of the Club to know

the opinion of its members as to the advisability of also sending a Four to compete for the honour of "Old Trinity" on the Delaware River. (The Barrington crew would race in the Graduates Race and a different DUBC crew would possibly race in the Undergraduates race.)

Fast forward to Henley Regatta and the crew selected by the University Rowing Club to compete in the Stewards' Cup for Top class Coxless Fours was as follows:-

G.H. Pentland (bow)

Croker Barrington

C.B. Barrington

G.A.E. Hickson (stk)

At Henley they were beaten by a good Thames R.C. crew by just over a length in a close race.

Shortly after Henley a double change was made to the boat for the Centennial Regatta as was reported in the Irish Times. "First, and not the least important, the substitution of Mr Ferguson in place of Mr Pentland, who is evidently rowed out; secondly, the change of Mr Hickson from stroke to No. 2, Mr Croke Barrington taking his place. Judging from the performance of the crew, constituted as it was at Henley, we think this a judicious step. Mr Hickson, no doubt, rows the liveliest stroke of the two, but his style of rowing in some of the essential particulars, differs from that of the remainder of the crew, who, having rowed together for two or three years in succession, have the advantage of being used to the same swing, etc. It is therefore quite plain that the change is for the better, one man being better able in himself to come into the style of the other three than vice-versa.

	st	lb
G.N. Ferguson	10	0
G.A. Hickson	11	7
C.B. Barrington	13	1
Croker Barrington	12	2

"Mr Ferguson is a Dublin man, and belongs to the University Boat Club, for which he did good service in '73-74. Mr Hickson hails from the "Kingdom of Kerry;" he is a member of the University Rowing Club, whose recent successes both in the metropolis and the provinces are mainly attributed to his individual prowess. Limerick lays claim to the two Messrs Barrington. It is needless to say that the county and the city of the "Violated Treaty" are justly proud of the brothers. They also belong to the University Boat Club, for which they helped to score many a win from the year '70 to '74 inclusive."

(In 1870 C.B.(Charles) Barrington won the Visitors' at Henley on DUBC's first year travelling there, he also won the Visitor's in '73 and '74 rowing stern pair with his brother Croker. In the '74 crew G.N. Ferguson was bow and one W.G. Towers rowed at 2 (Towers winning the Ladies' in '75 as well, and being the driving force behind the building of the Boathouse at Islandbridge and helping to coach the Thames cup winning crew of 1902))



Charles Barrington was Captain of DUBC in 1874.

G.A.E. Hickson was Captain of DURC in 1876 after 14 years of Arthur Bushe jr being captain of DURC.

A third Barrington brother, William, (also a DUBC oar) travelled as a spare and the coach was E.D. Brickwood, former amateur champion of England, who had been in charge of rowing affairs at Trinity for some time. (Biffin was the DUBC coach for year 1876).

As reported by the New York Herald: 'The crew arrived in excellent health and overflowing spirits. "Get ready for the Fenians!" shouted one of them from the steamer, as she drew into dock. This was answered by a party of gentlemen on the wharf, who were there to receive them, including Commodore Ferguson of the Schuylkill Navy, Mr. H.C. Miller of the Bachelor Barge Club, Philadelphia and Mr. Blatkic, the referee in the inter-collegiate races at Saratoga'. (The Saratoga races were organised separately to the Centennial Regatta)

The crew travelled by train to Philadelphia, where for the duration of the regatta they were the personal guests of Commodore Ferguson. The Herald report tells us: 'The crew bring but one boat with them, which is forty feet six inches in length. They are ready and anxious to participate in as many races as possible while here, and expressed great gratification when informed that there would be twenty-four entries in two great amateur fours races'.

In the History of Boat-Racing in Ireland, Forde Hall quotes from the old Match Book of Dublin University Rowing Club which provides a fascinating insight into the experiences of Charles Barrington and his crew in Philadelphia. Hall tells us that though the writer of the relevant piece in the Match Book is not identified 'he is likely to have been one of the party which made the long journey to the United States'. The Match Book gives an account of the International Regatta, held on the Schuylkill River at Philadelphia, on 28 August, 1876:

'We were represented at this regatta by the same crew which competed at Henley in June, with the exception of G.H. Pentland, whose place (bow) was occupied by G.N. Ferguson. After the last-named regatta crew had broken up and did not get together again until the Castleconnell regatta on July 22 (Rowing as LEBC). They then began to practice on the Mulcair river near Glenstal Castle, the home of Sir Croker Barrington, Bart., where the crew were staying. The practice was carried on in an old boat purchased from Kingstown R.H.B.C. and brought down here for the purpose. This was varied by an occasional row on the Shannon in one of the new fours built by Biffin for Limerick B.C. and these rows were of great service in getting the men together.

From the Match Book we learn that Barrington and his crew landed at New York on 15 August and '... proceeded next day to Philadelphia, having their racing craft fastened in the usual manner on the top of the train'. They practiced on the Schuylkill River twice a day from 18 to 29 August, when the international races began. The Match Book records:

'The heat... interfered greatly with the health and therefore the performance of the crew, the thermometer marking over 100 in the shade during the greater part of their stay at Philadelphia. ... The heat and drinking water were the principal enemies of the oarsmen and to these two sources may, I think be traced the want of success of the Dubliners, who on their first appearance on the Schuylkill were considered to be second only, if second, to London'.

The report in the Match Book is extremely critical of the course (not by any means as straight as we supposed from the description sent to us) the competence of the umpires, the siting of the judge's box ('at least 30 feet above the level of the river which was about 300 yards wide at the finish'), and the general staging and management of the regatta, though graciously going on to note the committee's good intentions and to '... ascribe the defects more to their ignorance of the management of large regattas than to any unworthy motives'.

The international races began on Monday, 28 August, and the Match Book tells us that Trinity were drawn in the first of seven heats:

'... the International Fours, with their names and stations, were as follows: Station 1: Eureka B.C.; Station 2: Argonauta B.C.; Station 3: D.U.R.C. (G.N. Ferguson, Croker Barrington, C.B. Barrington, G.A.E. Hickson (stroke), Dublin started very badly, allowing the two American Crews to get right away from them and were two lengths behind at the first quarter of a mile after which they began to draw up slowly on the leaders. At the mile mark (half-a-mile from the start), the Eureka's, hugging the shore round the bend, were half-a-length ahead of the Argonautas, who were three-quarters of a length in front of Dublin. The latter were now rowing well, having settled down to 38 strokes a minute at which they seemed to go best. Here the Argonautas bored Dublin out, and the Eureka's, taking full advantage of the bend, added a length to their lead. Shortly after this, Dublin

rowed past the Argonauta crew and went in pursuit of the leaders but failed to catch them, Eureka winning by a length and a half'.

INTERNATIONAL FOUR-OARED RACE.

FIRST HEAT. 2 P. M.			SECOND HEAT. 2.45 P. M.			
EUREKA, <i>Newark, N. J.</i> 1  B JOHN YOUNG. 2 W. RYNO. 3 PETER YOUNG. S J. ANGELMAN.	ARGONAUTA, <i>Bergen, Point, N. J.</i> 2  B ED. SMITH. 2 B. STEPHENSON. 3 CHAS. DUNBAR. S T. C. ELDRID.	DUBLIN UNIVERS'Y <i>Ireland.</i> 3  B G. H. FERGUSON. 2 C. B. BARRINGTON. 3 CROKER BARRINGTON. S GEO. E. HICKSON.	VESPER, <i>Philadelphia.</i> 1  B J. MINGUS. 2 W. CORSON. 3 FRANK HENDERSON. S HARRY McMILLAN.	YALE UNIVERSITY, <i>New Haven, Ct.</i> 2  B R. J. COOK. 2 W. W. COLLIN. 3 D. H. KELLLOGG. S JULIAN KENNEDY.	CRESCENT, <i>Philadelphia.</i> 3  B C. E. STEEL. 2 H. W. TERRY. 3 C. D. TATMAN. S GEO. MILLIKEN.	
THIRD HEAT. 3.30 P. M.			FOURTH HEAT. 4.15 P. M.			
COLUMBIA, <i>New York.</i> 1  B E. E. SAGE. 2 C. GRISWOLD. 3 C. S. HOYD. S J. T. GOODWIN.	ELIZABETH, <i>Portsmouth, Va.</i> 2  B PETER McGRATH. 2 JOHN MURRAY. 3 THOMAS GALLAGHER. S DENIS CALLAHAN.	QUAKER CITY, <i>Philadelphia.</i> 3  WITHDRAWN	BEAVERWICK, <i>Albany, N. Y.</i> 1  B J. T. McCORMICK. 1 J. H. McENTEE. 2 R. T. GORMAN. S J. J. GORMAN.	FALCON. <i>Burlington, N. J.</i> 2  B E. A. HORN. 2 H. McKIM. 3 T. MYERS. S JAS. HORN.	DUQUESNE, <i>Allegheny City, Pa.</i> 3  B DAVID FRITZ. 2 SAMUEL MOODY. 3 OLIVER MOODY. S FRANK DENNIS.	
FIFTH HEAT. 5 P. M.			SIXTH HEAT. 5.45 P. M.			
PENNSYLVANIA, <i>Philadelphia.</i> 1  B J. W. BARR. 2 W. RENNARD. 3 A. L. KAPPES. S H. CONRAD.	WATKINS, <i>New York.</i> 2  B A. McLAFFERTY. 2 F. STULL. 3 A. TYRRELL. S F. WAREMAN.	MALTA, <i>Philadelphia.</i> 3  B JOSEPH RABY. 2 C. E. BRELSFORD. 3 JOSEPH F. DUNTON. S W. A. HOPPER.	LONDON R. C. <i>London, England.</i> 1  B R. H. LABATT. 2 F. S. GULSTON. 3 A. TROWER. S J. O. HOWELL.	NORTHWESTERN, <i>Riverdale, Ill.</i> 2  B W. B. CURTIS. 2 JAMES JEROME. 3 JNO. KILLORIN. S CHAS. T. CORNING.	ATALANTA. <i>New York.</i> 3  B W. H. DOWNS. 2 H. W. RODGERS. 3 C. A. LYON. S J. E. FUSTIS.	
SEVENTH HEAT. 6.30 P. M.			INTERNATIONAL REGATTA, UNDER THE AUSPICES OF THE SCHUYLKILL NAVY AND THE U. S. CENTENNIAL COMMISSION. FIRST DAY, MONDAY, AUGUST 28th, 1876. N. B.—Positions as given on the programme are numbered from the WEST bank of the river. The cap worn by the Bow-oar designates the crew's color <small>Entered according to Act of Congress, in the year 1876, by A. W. FRAUENTHAL, in the Office of the Librarian of Congress, at Washington, D. C.</small>			ONEIDA, <i>Burlington, N. J.</i> 2  B R. M. WESTON. 2 F. G. WOODINGTON. 3 E. A. HUNT. S F. H. DEACON.

According to the Match Book, Barrington's crew entered for one other race, the International Graduates' Prize. They were the only crew to enter, and on the fourth day they took the prize, simply by rowing over the course. The Match Book records:

'A crew composed of three graduates and one non-university man wanted to enter against Dublin, but the Committee, on D.U.R.C. objecting on the grounds that they were not all graduates of

a university, refused their entry. D.U.R.C. expressed their willingness to race this crew after the regatta but the offer was not accepted'.

Forde Hall's suggestion that the writer of the Match Book was one of Barrington's crew is borne out by the following personalised comments;

'The boat which we brought out was the same as we rowed in at Henley this year, and was built by Biffin's. I think, however, that the action of the damp sea air, followed by the extremely hot weather, caused her to warp slightly and had the effect of making her very uncomfortable to row after we got to the States. In fact, she got a twist which made her be down on the bow and stroke oars at the same time'.

After the Philadelphia regatta, the crew were invited to Washington D.C. by Analostan B.C., and a race was staged on the Potomac River between the following two crews: Inside Station: Wm. Barrington (bow), 2. C.B. Barrington, 3. Croker Barrington, G.N. Ferguson (stroke); Outside Station: J.J. Penrose (bow), 2. A. Jameson, 3. G.N.L. Munn, G.A.E. Hickson (stroke). But a foul occurred some distance into the race; the umpire decided that both crews were at fault, and declared the contest a dead-heat. The Match Book tells us: 'A prize of a flag (according to the American custom) was awarded to each crew and these were presented to them by General Sherman, Commander-in-Chief of the United States Army, in the course of the evening and in the presence of a large and fashionable audience'.

Racing over, the crew visited Niagra Falls, Toronto, Montreal, Quebec and lakes Champlain and George, before returning to New York, which they left on 27 September, on board Scythia, and arrived back at Queenstown (Cobh), on 6 October.

The boat they brought over to America they left behind as a mark of gratitude and donated to the Quaker City Boat Club and may have been used by the first Penn crew in 1879.

This article comprises extracts from reports from the Irish Times, an article by Karl Johnson in the Old Limerick Journal and an article by Greg Denieffe on the Barringtons and is part of a larger article on the Barringtons which outlines the contribution that the Barringtons made to Limerick, to Rugby, to Rowing, to Ireland and their various contributions to both the First and second World Wars.
M.S.Pattison 2018