

With the author's emphasis.

A Few Notes for Future
P.B.C. Captains

BY

W. G. HERTEN,

Captain, 1920-21.

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With a few words of advice to the new captain, so that he may have a better idea of what to expect.



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Captain. 1860-61.

I am writing these notes for the following reasons : The P.B.C. has put up some good shows in the past, but it has also put up some jolly bad ones, and unfortunately, at the time of writing, the latter outweigh the former. I attribute this to two things :—

- I.—Lack of interest.
- II.—Bad captaining and coaching.

The former is the natural outcome of the latter.

The second is due to many causes. Inexperience, slackness, no ambition and not knowing what to do, and it is because of this last reason that I am writing.

To start out, you may have heard people say : " Peterhouse is not a rowing college and never will be, we'll never do any good on the river, etc., etc." The answer to that is " ROT."

In 1842 we were Head of the River. This is a goodish while back, but it doesn't matter ; there are only six colleges out of about 19 or 20 who can say that. Then you need only go into the " Sex " and look at

the oars there. These successes come about once every 10 or 20 years. Why? Because a good crew sticks together for about three years. Then they all go down and a new man takes the captaincy, often inexperienced and doesn't know how to act. People will lose interest in the boat, and everything will go to blazes. This will go on until a fellow comes up who has made up his mind to set things humming.

The first thing you must impress upon yourself is that you have been entrusted with the welfare of the Boat Club, which, therefore, comes before everything else, including yourself. If you do not engrave this on your mind, ten chances to one you will make a mess of things. Act in such a manner, so that at the end you can say with a clear conscience: "I have done my best." Though you may sometimes feel fed up with everything (and this will occur pretty often), it will be a great satisfaction to you to be able to say that, when you have finished.

If the man who was captain before you has gone down, impress on those old May-colours who are still with you, and upon Fresher's especially, the necessity for carrying on the good work. You have not been made captain because of your pretty eyes, so if you exert your personality, you will get people to follow you. Try and learn every blessed thing you can about rowing, as nothing looks so foolish and makes people lose confidence in you, as when a fellow asks you something during tubbing, and you do

not know what to answer. A great deal can be gathered from books, keeping your eyes open and talking with people who know something about it. Get to know everything about our boats, our boathouse, the boatman, etc., and see if there is room for any improvement; there generally is. If ever anything has to be done (repairing, etc.) see to it yourself that it is done, and don't rely on other people.

I shall endeavour to outline the general programme for the year, which I don't think changes much. You have probably been elected at the end of the preceding May Term, and you enter office on the following academical year. If you have been elected at any other time, you will have the ex-captain to help and advise you.

MICHAELMAS TERM.

As soon as you can after term starts, put up a notice in the "Sext," to the effect that: "Those who wish to go in for rowing or coxing are requested to put down their names, weights and previous experience." Besides this, send another notice round Hall calling people's attention to it. You will find, however, that this is not enough, so you'll have to be after the men yourself. You will naturally come into conflict with the Rugger and Soccer captains, and as these two games are generally more popular you will have to "gang warily." Don't fight these men, make friends with them, and they will probably let you have more men than if you wage war on them.

A meeting is held about the first or second week after term starts. After the usual reading of the minutes, etc., give a general idea of the year's programme, and a clear one of the term's. A financial meeting of the Amal. is also held about this time, at which you will have to present your estimate of expenses.

Your chief care should be to knock Fresher's into shape. Above all, spare no pains with heavy men; they take a good deal of teaching, but turn out the most useful in the end. You will have to work jolly hard, as *this term the basis for the Lent and Mays is laid*. Have as many Crock Eightts out as you can, and give them a week strict training. Having many boats out will give you more people to choose from later, and also creates greater competition among the men. Row the Crock Eightts race at the end of November.

Besides this, there are the Light Fours and the Colquhoun Sculls. If you have a boat for the former and have a good crew, have a shot at them. They are a great test of oarsmanship, and one learns a great deal. If you or anybody else is a sculler, go in for the Colquhouns. You may not win, but it is good practice. In general, encourage sculling as much as possible. It makes one familiar with the "feel," and balancing of a boat.

If you are in the Varsity Trial Eights, tell your Secretary exactly what you want, and

come and have a look at things as often as you can.

Re trials, send in the names of men you would like to have tried to the Secretary C.U.B.C. If you think you have a chance yourself, get your Secretary to send in the names.

A word as to Freshers who join the Boat Club. They are funny creatures, and generally consist of three varieties. Some are most extraordinarily casual. They generally have been demi-gods at school, and have rather a fine idea of themselves. These people want snubbing and sitting on, but carefully, as you don't want to lose them. Others are exuberant, making speeches, and think they know everything. Humour them and talk to them in a fatherly manner; they generally turn out all right. The third sort are generally very few and far between, and are everything they should be. They are the best of the lot, but not numerous. If you are lucky enough to find any, freeze on to them.

I shall not enter into a treatise on coaching, as on this subject there is plenty to be read in books like "The Complete Oarsman," by Lehmann, and Dr. Warre's "Grammar of Rowing." Also "Notes on Bruce's Coaching," several copies of which are in the boathouse. But one of the most difficult things, and which I have never been able to read anything about, is, what exactly to say to a Fresher, who has never had an oar in his hand before. It's useless to set

down a general rule. Most people start by giving a most tremendous hoik with their arms. It would be advisable to start out by showing them how to sit, hold the oar, keep a straight body, etc., and then impressing on them that the pulling is done by the body combined with a hard drive with the legs, and not with the arms, which might be comparable to two pieces of rope with iron hooks attached to the end, reaching from the shoulder to the oar. Looseness and freedom of movement should be talked about often. Once these things have been grasped, one can go on to feet, strong position, etc. Be careful not to use too technical language. If you tell a man he is not turning off his feather, he will probably not know what you mean. Explain things to him carefully, and show him how it is probably due to his faulty wrist work, i.e., not doing the turning with his inside hand, etc. The same with other faults, always trace them to their origin. This is important.

Hold meetings of your old May Colour coaches in your rooms, and tell them what to go for, thus ensuring a uniform style. Give each coach a copy of Bruce's Notes and Haviland's "Elements of Rowing," copies of which are to be kept in the boathouse cupboard. The race, though a time race, should be rowed as much like a bumping race as possible. Let them start 100 yards apart, and, if possible, have a three-minute, minute, and starting gun. All the impedimenta, i.e., guns, posts, etc., may be hired from the

C.U.B.C., by applying to their boatman. The crock pots are bought at Munsey's, on Market Hill. If you have a crock supper, permission is necessary from the Tutor and the Steward, and be careful that no damage is done to the college.

After the crocks, start forming the 1st Lent boat so as to have no trouble in starting at the beginning of the Lent Term. A few days before the end of term call a meeting, at which the officers resign and are generally re-elected. Impress on the first boat not to be too late in coming up, and remind the Hon. Treasurer of the Amal. to pay the boatman's weekly wages through a bank.

LENT TERM.

At a C.U.B.C. meeting at the end of last term the dates of the Lents will probably have been fixed, and this term you will reap the fruits of your last term's coaching. If you have worked hard, you will have the makings of a good crew, otherwise you won't have time to make up for what you have neglected. In selecting a crew, of course, don't be influenced by any personal considerations, and, if possible, select a crew of really hard workers. As captain you will probably be ineligible to row, so your job will be to coach the second boat, always provided you have been successful in finding a Trial Cap to coach the 1st boat. Never keep an outside coach waiting through unpunctuality, etc. Remember he is giving up much of his time and taking a great deal of

trouble with you, and therefore you should treat him as well as possible. Have him to lunch and tea several times, and talk things over with him. Once times are settled, leave things to him, but continue to keep an eye on him. Put your men into training for three weeks. I am giving a list of training rules further down. Don't allow absence from the boat on any account, though you may have to argue with a chap for hours. If anybody should break training, kick him out. Men in training are rather apt to become depressed, and tempers are often short. So always keep optimistic and cheerful, and never be downhearted, because if you are everybody else will be too.

Hold the usual Boat Club meeting at the beginning of the term, and present your estimates at the financial meeting of the Amal. Entrance fees for the Lents will either be communicated to you, or else look them up in the C.U.B.C. rules. Include a present for the coach.

As regards the races: Get the boatman to have the boats down at the peg by the railway bridge a good hour's time before it is necessary. See that he is there at the start to push the boat out. Don't forget your stop-watch, and see that it synchronises with the starter's. A revolver is often useful for giving ten, as a coach is seldom heard during the race. Other things you will probably remember from your own Lents.

Other races coming off are the Clinker Fours, Pairs, Junior Sculls and Freshmen's

Sculls. Try and get people to go in for them, it teaches them a great deal and represents the college.

At the end of the Term row the Peterhouse Challenge Sculls over the Colquhoun Course, or from Grassy to the Railway Bridge: This depends on the standard of sculling. If you haven't any funnies in the boathouse, hire two for a week from Bancham's. Starting pistols, etc., are to be had from the C.U.B.C., the same as for the crocks. A cup is given by the P.B.C., to be bought with the entrance fees, plus one pound from the Club. Any previous winners receive twenty yards penalty.

This brings the Lent Term to an end. The usual meeting is held. If you are going down that year, elect your successor so that you can lend him a helping hand. If not, then resign at the end of next term. Impress on your men that the work is not over yet. Most fellows are so relieved that the Lents are over, that such remarks as, "Never wanting to row again," are not uncommon, also tennis, cricket, a punt, and, last but not least, trips, are great rival attractions. Get people on to slides as soon as possible, and rope in all the Ruggers and Soccer men you can find.

MAY TERM.

The May Term will be found less of a hustle than the Lent Term. Most things that apply to the latter also apply now. Though you've got over a month to spare.

don't waste time, but also be careful not to over-train your men. There is really little else to be said. As I have already remarked, tennis, a punt, exams, and May Week are rather seductive, so keep your eyes open for slacking.

Other events coming off this term are the Lowe Double Sculls and the Varsity Pairs.

HENLEY.

Up to the present, Peterhouse have never been to Henley, but I hope that happy day is not too far off. Though nothing may be won, the presence of critical grey-headed old men on the bank, wearing light and dark blue caps, make one row one's very best, and a light ship and the Henley water teach one a great deal.

Firstly, choose the event you are going in for. In order of merit these are:—

Eights:—

Grand Challenge Cup.

Ladies' Challenge Plate.

Thames Challenge Cup.

Light Fours:—

Stewards' Challenge Cup.

Weyfold Challenge Cup.

Visitors' Challenge Cup.

Rules and Regulations will be found in the Rowing Almanack, especially those *re* applications for entries, etc.

The next thing is a boat. Hire or borrow one from a friendly college, and combine with someone else for sending it down to Henley, otherwise it will be expensive.

Then comes board and lodgings. There are occasions when the C.U.B.C. arrange all this, and in any case ask the President for advice on this matter, otherwise you'll have to see about hiring a furnished house. Take a gyp, a bedder and a boatman with you. Accommodation for boats is provided by the Henley Regatta Committee, also tents fixed up as changing-rooms, etc. Make sure of getting somebody to coach you. At Henley one goes out twice a day, and it is strange that one does not feel half as tired as after one day's outing on the Cam. Go down one or two days beforehand to see that everything is fixed up. Give your men a week's holiday after the May's, and congregate at Henley on the Saturday after, which gives you just under a fortnight.

The biggest difficulty is, of course, the money question. At present it cannot be done under £150—that is for ten men for a fortnight (including gyp and bedder), and this money will have to be raised either from the Amalgamation Club or else by passing the hat round.

IN GENERAL.

1. Attend all C.U.B.C. meetings, and if you are ever in a fix don't hesitate to ask the President for advice.

2. As soon as the Trial Eights are more or less certain, make sure of getting a Trial-cap to coach the 1st Lent boat, and later the 1st May boat. Speak to the President about it.

3. Make your estimate for expenses at the beginning of each term, which must be presented at the financial meeting of the Amal. Keep within your estimate, as it makes a very bad impression if you exceed it.

4. Many men are lost during training owing to illness and boils. Much may be read about over-training, etc. The great thing is to act promptly. As soon as you notice a man getting sleepy, looking rather tired and pale, bad-tempered and with rather a drawn face, let him stay in bed a little longer, and a glass of port or two wouldn't be amiss. Boils are a pleasant result of fixed seats. Impress upon your men the utmost importance of not neglecting rawness and open wounds. As soon as the skin gets slightly raw, dose it with Oxide of Zinc ointment morning and evening, and above all keep raw places clean. Tell them to wear rowing slips with a large piece of cotton wool inside, which can be changed as often as possible. If things get worse and boils and glands begin to develop, send them to a doctor at once.

5. Don't forget to register a bump at the Goldie boathouse, otherwise you'll get fined a guinea.

6. Try and get to know the C.U.B.C. President, Secretary, Trialcaps, Blues and other captains. They are useful people to know. Don't have any ridiculous ideas about "Won't be seen dead being polite to a fellow just because he is a Blue." In life, the better people you mix with, the better

man you will be. In rowing it is the same. The better men you row and talk with, the better an oar and coach you will be.

7. As regards training halls, etc. Permission must be got from the Tutor and the Steward. If questions are asked *re* anything being usual and having been done in former years, always say "Yes." The only way to get things done by Dons, Cooks and Butlers, is to simply sit down and argue, and stick to it until you get what you want. Make friends with the Cook and Butler, and you'll get more out of them than by animosity, but don't be afraid of them.

8. See that your men always get a good and plentiful breakfast while in training. Bad ones only cause grumbling and bad tempers.

9. Insist on a separate training table, and do your utmost to keep it separate from the "common horde."

10. Don't ever show that you are down-hearted. Stick it.

II. Training rules:—

Training will start on the th, for the boat, and for as spare men. The following rules will be observed : 7-15 a.m. Get up. Those living in or near college will congregate in the Old Court for a run. Those living far away are put on their honour to do the same (brisk walk for 20 minutes, 100 yards sprint. Bad weather excepted).

8-15 a.m. Breakfast in Hall.

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10-30 p.m. Bed (or earlier).

Drinks: Nothing fizzy, no wines or spirits, etc. Half-pint of beer for lunch, one pint for dinner as maximum.

Food: No pastry, hot muffins, crumpets, hot toast, deadlies or anything stodgy. Roast potatoes only. No eating between meals.

Games: No other strenuous exercise except rowing. All superfluous energy to be worked off in the boat.

Smoking: NONE.

Illness: Crews are under strict orders to report at once if they notice the slightest thing wrong with them, paying special attention to boils, etc.

Sundays: Rules about getting up and breakfast need not be observed.

Last, but not least: The above notes are what I have gone by during my captaincy, and during that time the college did not lose a single place on the river. If you find them useful, see that they are kept in good condition and pass them on to your successor. If you find them no good, then tear them up. Good luck!