

Melbourne University

Boat Club



AUSTRALIAN UNIVERSITIES' ROWING CONTEST

The first Inter-Varsity race was rowed on December 20, 1870, between fours representing Sydney and Melbourne over a three-and-a-half mile course on the Yarra. There is record of a boat race between representatives of the States of Victoria and New South Wales contested on the Parramatta River in 1863, but there does not seem to have been any other race of an interstate or international character prior to the Inter-Varsity race of 1870. This race was won by Melbourne in 31 mins. 4 secs. In the next year a Melbourne four again defeated Sydney, this time on the Parramatta Course.

The race was then abandoned until 1888, when eights representing Sydney, Melbourne and Adelaide Universities met on the Victorian Hambourg Reach course. Melbourne was first, with Adelaide second and Sydney third. Sydney, stroked by W.A. Conlon, recorded its first win in 1890, when it won from Melbourne on the Yarra River course. Adelaide, stroked by W.H. Gosse, won for the first time in 1896, when it defeated Sydney and Melbourne on the Yarra River Course. The race has been rowed every year since 1888 except during the war years, 1915-1918 and 1941-1945. There was no race in 1965.

In 1896 a most appropriate trophy was provided for the race, when Oxford and Cambridge "Blues" presented a cup as a perpetual trophy for race. The historic value of such a trophy makes it unique in Inter-Varsity if not Australia.

Until 1920, only Sydney, Melbourne and Adelaide contested the race, but in this year Queensland sent to Melbourne a crew which finished third. In 1921 they came second, and won in 1922 and 1923. E.B. Freeman stroked both winning crews.

In 1924 Tasmania entered a crew, and in 1925 won the race from Sydney at Brisbane. R.A. Scott stroked the winning crew.

Western Australia competed for the first time in 1927, when a crew stroked by F.A. Williams won on the Nepean River course in New South Wales. This was the first occasion on which a crew had won on its first start since the original race in 1870, and it was also the first occasion on which all six Australian Universities were represented in the race.

In 1956, the first University of New South Wales crews competed and Monash entered for the first time in 1963. In 1966, the Australian National University and Newcastle both made their first appearance and in 1969 LaTrobe University entered for the first time.

The sculling championship was first held in 1927 and in 1969 it included the first representative sent by Flinders University. The Lightweight Fours Championship (Sir Fred J. Schonell Cup) over 2000 metres was included in the program in 1963 and 1969 saw the first race, in Coxswainless Pairs, for the Carlton and United Goblets.

The Kings Cup 1971

The Kings Cup is the perpetual trophy for the Australian Eight-oared Championship. This magnificent gold Cup was originally presented by His Majesty King George V for the Eight-oared Race between crews from the armies of the Allies in the 1914-1918 war. This race took the place of the Grand Challenge Cup Race at Henley Regatta 2nd to 4th July 1919 and was won by the A.I.F. No. 1 crew stroked by Captain H.C. Disher of Melbourne University Boat Club. Today Doctor Disher is patron and principal benefactor of M.U.B.C.

On 24th April this year he was Guest of Honour at the Kings Cup Regatta in Perth where he saw Victoria stroked by former M.U.B.C. oarsman Kerry Jelbart win the trophy for the third year in succession.

It is a great and coveted honour to be selected to row for ones state. This year there were some fifty oarsmen keen for places in four club senior eights - M.U.B.C., Yarra Yarra, Mercantile and Monash. Most oarsmen started training in October and partook of keen racing in many of the 20 regattas before the championship 8's at Ballarat on March 8th. Of the 32 Victorian oarsmen who competed in that thrilling and unforgettable race twelve, including Bill Liley, Bill Magennis and Greg White from M.U.B.C. were selected in the State squad and Roger Moore of Monash was named State Coach.

After one week of musical seats and chopping and changing in front of the 3 state selectors the squad was reduced to 10, an eight plus 2 emergencies.

A week later the crew was selected and seated as follows:

| | | | |
|---------|---------------------|---------------|---------------------------|
| Bow | - Graene Boykett | - Mercantile- | 13.4, 6.1 |
| 2 | - Erik Vahl Meyer | - Monash | - 13.0, 6.1 $\frac{1}{2}$ |
| 3 | - David Douglas | - Mercantile- | 14.10, 6.6 |
| 4 | - David Michelmores | - Yarra | - 14.0, 6.3 |
| 5 | - David Bishop | - Monash | - 13.10, 6.1 |
| 6 | - Will Baillieu | - Yarra | - 14.4, 6.4 |
| 7 | - John McKeand | - Monash | - 13.4, 6.4 $\frac{1}{2}$ |
| Stroke- | Kerry Jelbart | - Monash | - 14.5, 6.3 |
| Cox | - Adrian Maginn | - Mercantile- | 7.12, - |
| Emerg.- | Lawrence Stokes | - Monash | - 13.12, 6.1 |
| | Bill Magennis | - M.U.B.C. | - 14.0, 6.2 $\frac{1}{2}$ |

The heights and weights give some indication of the physical shape required for state selection these days. Of interest to schoolboys is that John McKeand and Will Baillieu rowed as recently as 1969 in the Head of the River while Bill Magennis and David Michelmore rowed in 1968. The Monash members had won more than 20 senior events each this season while those from Yarra had won none and from M.U.B.C. one; the moral being it is easier to get in the state crew if one wins more senior events during the season than ones opponents.

With the crew named the coach had five weeks to produce a winning combination. He pointed out to the squad that there had been a long season of hard rowing (20% longer than 1970) and that everyone was basically fit. Consequently the emphasis in all training sessions was on quality strokes. An acceptable middle of the course boat speed would have to be maintainable with less loss of energy than the opposition. To do this the recovery had to be relaxed and wasteful exertion i.e. effort that did not propel the boat eliminated.

After a few weeks of striving for this on the Yarra the crew moved to the bluer waters of the Canning River. Perth for the final ten days training on the course originally designed for the 1962 Empire Games. There were two outings each day just as in Intervarsity on location training.

In the heat, in poor but following conditions Victoria started too slowly and could not catch the N.S.W. crew, but with a faster start Victoria won both the repechage and the final.

The final result of the training efforts is reflected in the times of the final below. Victoria started well and rowed the middle 1000 m. at the same speed as the others but had race left to storm home to victory in the last 500 m.

| | 1st500 | 2nd500 | 3rd500 | 4th500 |
|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| VIC. | 1:25.8 | 1:29.2 | 1:30.6 | 1:28.5 |
| S.A. | 1:24.5 | 1:29.0 | 1:30.6 | 1:30.0 |
| N.S.W. | 1:26.2 | 1:29.3 | 1:30.9 | 1:29.7 |
| TAS. | 1:27.1 | 1:28.6 | 1:30.6 | 1:30.8 |

4th 500 m. times for S.A., N.S.W. and TAS. based on their approximate finishing position of 1 sec., 2 secs., respectively behind VIC.

Now that the Kings Cup is over for another year all Victoria's winning oarsmen are back in the melting pot hoping for selection again next year. The first task will be selection in the various club senior 8's. Competition will be especially keen next season as any one of four clubs could win and form the basis of the next Kings Cup VIII. And victory in the 1972 Kings Cup could mean a trip to the Olympic Games in Munich: M.U.B.C. will be hoping to be able to add more names to the honour board of M.U.B.C. member who have represented Australia.

The 1971 Head-Of-The-River

Geelong Grammar, under coach Frank Covill, showed a clear superiority over the rest of the field to win the 1971 Head-of-the-River. Although the head wind was to Geelong's advantage, there would be little dispute that even had the conditions been following Geelong would still have won, though probably by a smaller margin. This year's crew was a much smoother and more skilful combination than the 1970 crew which had been beaten so narrowly by Wesley in a strong tail wind. However, determination, toughness and power through the water were still the dominant features of Geelong's rowing and these enabled them to overcome the more polished and technically correct Xavier College crew.

A feature of the regatta this year was the ease with which the three heats were won. Geelong Grammar paddled down the course, being able to finish at 31 strokes to the minute, in defeating Geelong College and St.Kevins by 4 lengths. Both Xavier and Wesley cleared out to an early lead in their heats and were able to sit on the other crews at a comfortable rating, eventually winning by margins approaching 2 lengths without really extending themselves. With the present set-up it is unusual to see the 3 best crews all reach the Winners' Final as occurred this year (although it is difficult to envisage any satisfactory system of repercharges to overcome this given the limited number of stations on the Barwon.) One suggestion worthy of consideration however, and one which would involve little reorganisation, is to take the crews finishing second and third in the four crew heat into the Intermediate Final so that four crews would contest that race rather than the present three.

Wesley College, third in the final, were once again a very polished crew and helped to maintain Alan Mitchell's outstanding record over the last decade. The stomach illness which hit three crew members on the day of the final could not be helped, but even without that misfortune it would have been hard to see Wesley quite reaching the standard of the other two eights in the final.

Of the rest of the crews Scotch was the only one to stand out but, although it did improve remarkably as the season progressed, it was not in the same class as Geelong Grammar. No doubt the difficulties which faced coach Don Macmillan in selecting the fastest combination hampered the crew to some extent, as the frequent crew and seating changes did not assist the crew in settling down. Geelong College's result was an improvement but it has a long way to go before it regains the supremacy which it enjoyed in the early sixties Melbourne Grammar was not up to the standard of recent Grammar crews and were possibly fortunate to reach the Intermediate Final. They were a much lighter crew than is usual for Melbourne Grammar at only 11st. 12lbs average in contrast to the 13st 4lbs crew which graced the water in '68. Given that weight disparity, the only way they could have emulated those Grammar crews would have been to show more aggression through the water, a trait which often appears to be lacking from Grammar crews but unfortunately for their supporters they were not equal to the task.

It was a pity to see the four schools newest to Public School rowing all in the Losers' Final and it is to be hoped that they can break out of that position next year, so arousing increased interest in the race. The lack of tradition of success is one of the main factors preventing that success and until these schools can develop a real dislike of losing they will find that win very elusive. To be satisfied with anything less than first only places success further from their grasp.

Of the four Carey Grammar would appear to be in the best position to challenge for supremacy in 1972 with a win in the Losers' Final of the firsts and in the Intermediate Final of the seconds. However they will need to show more consistency than the 1971 Carey crew did - they were last in their heat 1 length behind Brighton Grammar, only to finish 2 to 3 lengths in front of them in the final. St.Kevins proved to be a very fast finishing crew in both heat and final Geelong College held on to finish 1 foot ahead of them in the heat and Carey finished only $\frac{1}{4}$ length ahead in the final after having almost 1 lengths lead with 500 metres to go. One wonders whether perhaps they could have learnt to pace their race better had they had more regatta experience. Very few crews, let alone school crews, win from behind and to do so requires a great deal of confidence in a crew's ability to win coupled with an enormous desire to win. Regatta racing can help a crew develop this.

Caulfield Grammar rowed well together but lacked the strength and power to row their style effectively - it requires a great deal of leg drive to avoid rush developing in the boat. Nevertheless they pushed Melbourne Grammar very hard

for second place in their heat, and had they been able to sustain the power over the last 500 metres may well have edged Grammar out. Brighton Grammar, whilst having quite a heavy crew, lacked the toughness, strength and experience of the other crews. Considering the average age of the Brighton crew their effort was commendable, but until Brighton can build up the numbers in their boat club so that it is possible to select a crew from Matriculation oarsmen who have the extra experience and toughness, they will find it very difficult to break through.

The congratulations of all are due to a very good Geelong Grammar crew.

Rowing at Melbourne University

Rowing at M.U.B.C. is divided into four periods, firstly the normal Victorian Rowing Associations regatta calendar which begins in October and concludes at Easter. This past season M.U.B.C. had over 190 entries and was represented in all except two of the regattas (due to exams.). Included in these regattas are eleven championship events for eights, fours, pairs and classes, M.U.B.C. were winners of four of these championships, second in three and third in two.

The second period of M.U.B.C. rowing is the short but highly competitive College rowing season, the colleges and those not in college each form two eights. The standard of these eights is demonstrated in the results of the "Open Eights" at Scotch-Mercantile regatta where college crews have won for the past three years.

The third period is devoted to Intervarsity competition, each University is represented by an eight, light-weights four, coxless pair and scull. The team is subsidised in travelling expenses and takes part in the competition in a different state each year. For this event of University Rowing there is the lure of the coveted rowing blue.

The final phase of the rowing year is the Winter Regattas, sculling competitions and the training for the next season in the gym.

Light-Weight Rowing

"An oarsman weighing 154 lbs or under shall be eligible to compete as a light-weight oarsman provided that the average weight (without coxswain) of the crew of which he is a member does not exceed 150 lbs. The preceding is an extract from the

Victorian Rowing Associations - "Laws of Boat Racing". Light weight rowers at M.U.B.C. are at present achieving a remarkable degree of success having won the Australian Intervarsity and Victorian Light weight Fours Championships for the past two seasons, as well as the Victorian Light weight Eight Championship and overall the club won the Victorian Light-weight Premier-ship for the season.

Why does M.U.B.C. achieve this success? Apart from the level of dedication, which is required for all serious oarsmen, the very high standard of coaching and the great interest shown by club members. Light-weight rowing was non-existent at M.U.B.C. till 1963 when it was first introduced into the Intervarsity Programme, the club won the first race and has won five out of the seven subsequent races. In this short time M.U.B.C. has been fortunate to have the services of some excellent coaches, at present Dr. Mark Schapper coach of this years winning Victorian Light-weight four in the Penrith Cup is the Senior Coach in this division. William Stokes is at present coaching this year's Intervarsity team having till now coached junior eights and college eights to victorious positions. Interest by all M.U.B.C. members in Light weight rowing is a tremendous encouragement to the oarsmen concerned. Often Lightweighters in other clubs are far too often dismissed as those who have been passed over because of size.

Equipment, supplied by the Melbourne University Sports Union is of a standard comparable to that possessed by light-weight rowers of any club in Australia, a factor vital for success. This equipment is designed by the makers for use only by light-weight oarsmen and is maintained in good order by supervision of those who use the equipment. Light-weight rowing provides a unique opportunity for oarsmen who have represented their school in junior crews as well as the first crews.

Competition for M.U.B.C. light-weight oarsmen extends from Intervarsity to Victorian and Australian championships, M.U.B.C. has been represented in the Penrith Cup (Australian Championship for Light-Weight Fours) for the past three years, in 1970 the entire crew and coach were club members. The 1971 winning Penrith Cup crew consisted of two club members, the coach and boat were also part of the club.

M.U.B.C. is strong in Light-weight rowing and wishes to remain that way, hence each year the club recruits for new members, this is illustrated in that this year's Inter-Varsity crew contains only one previous Light-weight oarsmen.

Oarsmen

You will probably be leaving school at the end of this year and I would like to suggest that you continue rowing. Club and University rowing has a lot to offer any keen and enthusiastic sportsman. M.U.B.C. is anxious to continue on from last seasons successes, and try and repeat those performances as well as add to them. Four of last years "head of river" oarsmen were selected in our Victorian Champion Junior Eight this year, this illustrates the success you as an oarsmen at M.U.B.C. may enjoy. Bearing this in mind, it would be a shame to make a decision to row with another club, if you are at all contemplating attending University.

If you contemplate attending University, but you are in doubt as to your entrance requirements, you are very welcome to join the club for the coming season and when your future has been decided you may put in for a transfer to another University or Rowing Club.

HOW DO YOU JOIN?

- (a) Come rowing any Sunday after June 13th at 9.30 a.m.
- (b) Contact one of the following club representatives:-

- * Rob Zahara, 868678.
- * Lach Payne, 534425.
- * Bill Magennis, 811987.

Hoping to see you down at the river bank in the future, I hope this publication has helped to illustrate University and Victorian Rowing.
