

FEATURE PAGE

LIFE TO-DAY AT BRITISH UNIVERSITIES

By ANTHONY BENN
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(From The Student Review).

There are more than 65,000 students at British Universities today, living and working under widely differing conditions, and I should therefore be guilty of a serious error if I attempted to generalize. The war has caused many changes and the problems which have arisen as a result are common to most of us, but it is of Oxford that I shall be writing, in the paragraphs which deal with the activities of the student in the lecture room and outside it.

By last October the Universities were crowded to capacity and this raised a number of problems. The National housing shortage was reflected in the severe difficulties of finding accommodation and one college, for example, built pre-fabricated huts in the quadrangle-billets, strangely reminiscent of the war. The midday meal for those in lodgings often necessitated a half-an-hour's queuing and the fuel restrictions, which cut off heating in the winter months, were not especially conducive to concentrated effort. The limited supply of books, now in greater demand than ever before, virtually emptied the shops of standard works, and in consequence the libraries became full to overflowing. The lecturers faced classes of a size that before the war they had never dreamed of, and I heard one pleading with all those present, who had even an elementary knowledge of the subject, to go away and thus make room for genuine beginners. The average age had risen of undergraduates with families of their own. One, in my own college, was living with his wife, herself a student, who took her own final examination a few weeks before having her first baby. In general the atmosphere is excellent. The minor discomforts of life, for they are no more, have made for a very co-operative spirit, and there is little or no friction.

Amongst the wide variety of subjects that can be studied, History, English and the Social Sciences are by far the most popular, for they provide a good foundation for those who are later planning to enter the professions, and an equally good background education for those who are going straight into business or the Civil Service. Quite naturally these returned men and women devote a considerable amount of thought to the problem of their futures. They feel that they can only justify their being at the university at an age when they would normally be earning, by making a determined effort to qualify themselves better for the job that they propose to take up later on. In consequence there is a much more serious attitude to work than prevailed before the war. This greater maturity is also attributable to the experience enjoyed in the services and to the fact of having mixed and worked with people from all walks of life both at home and abroad. Few would have missed these opportunities, and the institution of a year's military training between school and university, under the new National Service Act (whatever the rights and wrongs of conscription, as such) will extend these

advantages to those who are coming on. Pure scholarship may suffer as a result, but the wider educational interest will, I feel sure, be better served.

It must be remembered that in the lives of those at Oxford, as indeed elsewhere, the general student activities play almost as important a part as the strictly academic work. Since the war there has been a great revival of these. The sporting clubs are well under way again and the University Air Squadron, with its Army equipment, enjoying a large ex-service membership, have begun their job of recruiting and training for the reserve forces. Then there are the general clubs—more than 60 of them. They cater for a wide range of interests, Ballet, Theatrical, Literary, Philosophical, Scientific and purely social clubs which only exist as the excuse for a weekly dinner. The oldest, largest and best-known is the Union Society, founded in 1823. This has a total membership of more than 25,000 of whom nearly 3,000 are in residence. In its weekly debates the most controversial issues of the day, both national and international, are regularly thrashed out, and periodically some well-known statesman will come down as a visitor to participate. Centred largely round the Union are the political clubs themselves. With membership of 1,200 the Conservative Association now predominates, a fact that is partially accounted for by the large numbers of returned officers in whom six years of messes and ante-rooms have produced a strong sense of political and social respectability. In any case Oxford has always been "Agin' the Government" and is well-known as the "home of lost causes".

The Liberal Club is much stronger than its Party's strength in the country would lead one to expect, and on the left there is a vigorous Labour Club and a Communist, Socialist Club. Even the Fascists have organized an unofficial group, which is small and ineffective, consisting mainly of young "intellectuals" and ex-officers. These clubs hold one main meeting each, normally on Fridays, which are frequently addressed by prominent political figures, and are in consequence well-attended. In addition each hold their own study groups and smaller meetings for discussion and debate, as well as regular gatherings of a purely social kind.

Much more could be done in this direction. Our links with the Continent have already been largely re-established, and for the first time since the war, three of us are going later this year on a debating tour of American and Canadian universities. Trips of this kind, and especially those between the nations of the Commonwealth, should be a regular feature of student life. We have many immediate and long-term problems in common, and there could be no surer way of resolving them, nor any better method of creating the conditions which will bring about a more durable international understanding, than full and frequent contact at the university level.

OXFORD UNIVERSITY,

13 August 1947.

PACKS

By Grant Campbell

(Continued from last week.)

For regular packing for one who sleeps out and totes his bed and shelter with him, the best pack sack and also the simplest and cheapest is known as the Duluth or, from its inventor, the Poirier pattern. Originally made for trappers, timber cruisers, and other professional woodsmen, it is now used by many sportsmen as well. The Duluth sack has no boxed sides, but is sewn up in the form of a simple bag and so is made wider and higher than boxed ones of equal capacity (suggested size 28 by 30 inches).

The advantage is that one's blanket, which goes in first, as a pad for the back can be folded two feet square, or a little more, and, consequently in fewer thicknesses, hence the bag packs flatter than a boxed one and does not bulge so far backward at the top.

The shoulder straps of the Duluth sack starts from a common centre, where they are riveted to an inside piece of leather. They fork from between one's shoulder blades like a pair of suspenders. The flap is half as long as the pack and it is fitted with three long straps whereby the pack may be adjusted snugly to a large or small load. As the pack has a wide mouth, it is easy to pack and to get into. The three straps hold down the flap closely at the corners as well as in the centre and so keep out rain and snow and prevent things spilling out.

Attached to the Duluth pack is a tump or head-band, a very necessary addition to almost any kind of pack used for carrying heavy weights. In the North country the tump line is used exclusively for packing huge loads over short portages between water routes. With a pack-sack, it will generally not be used until the shoulders tire, then it relieves the strain. It is an advantage climbing steep hillsides. When fording a swift stream, crossing ice, or a fallen tree, going over wind-falls, crossing ice, or passing other dangerous places, the shoulder straps may be dropped, the head-strap alone being employed, then, if you slip or get overbalanced, the load can be cast off instantly by throwing back the head, and you save your bones or possibly your life. When the tump is not in use, drop it down over the cinch.

THE PACK BASKET

In the forests of the Appalachian states and in the Maritime Provinces of Canada a favourite carrier is the pack basket, made smaller at the top than the bottom, and flattened on the back. An average size is about 18 inches high, 17 inches wide at the bottom and 15 at the top by about 12 inches deep and the weight is from 3 to 5 pounds. Common ones generally are too small at the top for easy stowage of bulky articles; but if the basket is made more than 12 inches deep it will drag back unmercifully on the shoulders. It is too heavy, too abrasive, and it does not stow so well in a canoe as a pack sack of equal capacity. In my opinion, the best that can be said of the pack basket is that it is a bulky thing in which to carry canned and bottled goods, when some other fellow does the packing.

Message To Ladies From Co-ed President

Hello, girls and boys. Welcome and welcome back! Here's wishing you the best Senior, Junior, Sophomore or Freshman year ever. But remember, you're the ones who can make it so. Go into your curricular and extra-curricular activities with all the swing of a "Lavagetto."

The Ladies Society has already enjoyed their first big social event of the year, the Sophette Banquet. It was lovely girls. Whoever made that delicious gingerbread? Mrs. Gregg was presented with a gift, a small token of our appreciation of her interest in the Co-eds while up the Hill. She spoke briefly, promising not to desert us entirely, and to attend future functions whenever possible.

I'm very glad to see all the Freshettes participating so eagerly in campus activities. Now we'll really have some cheer-leaders.

Congratulations to Faith and Audrey on their tennis wins; To Jackie, who is the new Secretary-Treasurer of the Ladies Society; To Virginia, who is assistant Secretary to R. Hay of the S. R. C.; to all those who passed their sups, and best wishes to Shirley, who recently became engaged.

Girls, please try to attend all the meetings of the Ladies Society. The first Co-eds handed together to work as a unit for their own good. We, as a society, are still functioning on that basis. If there is anything you would like to see changed, or perhaps some new activity added to our yearly schedule, bring the matter up at a meeting and we will work together to see what we can do.

I might add, the members of the Ladies Society, do not mind spreading cheer amongst our fellow "Up the Hillers," whether collectively or individually.

MARY DOHANEY,

President of the Ladies Society.
P.S.—See you all on the train when we invade Mt. A.

CO-ED COLUMN

By Betty McDonald

Well girls—how does it feel to be back "Up the Hill." It certainly is good to see the old familiar faces again. How we've missed the Reading Room and our bridge games. Strange though, not to behold the countenances of last year's stately seniors. To all the new Co-eds, Freshettes, Freshie Sophs and Freshie Juniors we say—welcome to U. N. B.

So far, the girls say its pretty dull—we miss the dances in the Gym—we miss the dances, period. As for classes, the general comment is the same old grind.

The Sophette Banquet given in honor of the Freshettes was a big success, delicious food, charming Sophette waitresses. Why weren't more of you there? The president of the Ladies Society, Mary Dohaney, presented Mrs. Gregg with a gift on behalf of the society. We will miss having Mrs. Gregg at our banquets and teas—she has been so kind to all the girls during her three years "Up the Hill." (Mary made a funny mistake when introducing Mrs. Gregg she said: "Now that you are no longer the President's wife" — this brought peals of laughter and did Mary blush.)

The Ladies Society meeting was being held in the evening this year in order that the Freshettes at Alex and others may attend. This should be more convenient than at one o'clock, following a morning's lectures. Plans are that the meeting will be a social evening so some on girls and bring your knitting.—You can play bridge or just gab if you want to.—Be sure and read our president's message.—See you soon! With some news about the Co-eds at Alexander, we hope.

ARE YOU A

"Wish-I-Could?"



IT'S amazing how many times you hear "I wish I could smoke a pipe"... especially when the solution is so very simple. Having decided to smoke a pipe it's best to start off with a Burley tobacco. It will keep your tongue cool, and once you light up it stays lit.

Picobac is the pick of the Burley crop, grown in sunny southern Ontario.

GET SOME TO-DAY!

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