



THE AULA CLUB

The aim of the Aula Club is to recapture and perpetuate the Trinity Hall spirit by bringing together a mix of high achievers from the College in whatever field or discipline, and particularly those who enjoy dining together.

All its members are elected and are expected to have contributed to College life in some way. About 15 new members a year are elected from the undergraduates and postgraduates who are graduating. It is also possible for Trinity Hall members to be nominated and seconded at a later date. Anyone interested in joining should contact the Alumni Office in the first instance.

There are currently around 400 Aula Club members including alumni of all subjects from matriculation years 1939 to 2017. In addition to dining fees, which are subsidised for all members, there is a modest annual subscription.

The Club is managed by an Honorary Secretary with the assistance of a small committee of members, which meets two or three times a year. Today the Club meets twice a year, in March and December, at a variety of venues in London and biennially in Cambridge and between 70 and 100 members attend. Over the generations many Masters, Senior Tutors and other distinguished Fellows have been regular diners as guests or as elected members.

The Club maintains its strong historic links to Trinity Hall sport through the Aula Fund, which supports Trinity Hall students aspiring to represent the University in any Blue or Half Blue sport. The Club has also made donations to College appeals and projects, including the Aula Bar.

The history of the club

The Aula Club was founded in 1892 as a dining club for alumni. It was the inspiration of John F Fearon and Harold Tingey (1887). The Club owes its longevity largely to the efforts of John F Fearon and his son, John R Fearon, who, between them, organised its meetings for all but the last eight of the first hundred years. John F Fearon was elected an honorary Fellow in 1920.

Seven men attended the first dinner at the Holborn Restaurant in London on 8th April 1892, and the twelve who came to the second dinner on 18th June were elected founder members of the Club. Those invited were: W Harold Tingey, John F Fearon, Alan Hog, H S Millett, George Ridehalgh, R J A Morrison, W H Wailer, M B Johnson, C A Cancellor, S P Turnbull, R Trencer Michell, R A Wigram, T Willans Nussey.

In 1897, the Master Ben Latham, and Vice Master Edward Beck, were elected Honorary Members, thus cementing the Dining Club to the College. Meetings were subsequently held three times a year, at the end of each university term, with the summer meeting in Cambridge, occasionally in the Master's, where in 1898 the Master requested that the College be referred to in the Toast by the affectionate and customary title "The Old House".

Soon after the Trinity Hall Association was founded in 1904, the Club gave up its summer meeting in Cambridge, and it has since met twice a year in London, usually at a club. The first meeting of the year is held at around the time of the University Boat Race in March or April, and the second one on the evening of the Varsity Rugby Match in December.

It has always been the custom for a senior member of the Club to take the chair at the Club's meetings; on the only occasion on which this rule was broken, the chair was shared by twins. Although speeches are not encouraged except on special occasions, the chairman proposes the traditional toasts: the Royal Family, the Old House, the Governing Body, and members of the College who have represented the University in Varsity matches against Oxford since the previous meeting.

The Club's membership has risen steadily. From 20 in 1900, it reached 250 in 1960 and has since grown to around 400.

The Aula Club and support of the College

The Club maintains its links with the College in several ways. It invites members of the Governing Body and undergraduates to dine as guests, and several Fellows are members of the Club in their own right. The Club also makes gifts to the College from time to time. The most well-known of these donations will be the Aula Fund and Aula Bar.

Aula Awards:

In 2000, £10,000 was donated to establish the endowed Aula Club Fund to assist students with the expenses of representing the University in a Varsity match against Oxford in any Blues sport. The committee uses surpluses in the Club's accounts to increase the Aula Club Fund, and at the time of writing a further £30,000 has been added in this way. The Fund is administered by the Tutorial Office, to whom applications for grants should be made.

The Aula Bar:

In November 2006 the Club launched an appeal to members to raise funds for the new bar – to be named The Aula Bar – within Phase II of the College's Milestones project to rebuild and refurbish the central site. A total of some £210,000 was collected from the members of the Club and The Aula Bar was formally opened in March 2009 when the Club dined in Trinity Hall for the first time for more than a century.

Other donations:

- to the Trinity Hall Endowment and War Memorial Fund in 1919;
- helped establish an Organ Scholarship in 1923;
- lent the College funds to help buy land at the current Wychfield site in 1925;
- commemorated the Hall's sexcentenary in 1950 by donating the subscriptions accumulated during the Second World War to the College's appeal and adding a James II porringer to the College's collection;
- marked the 650th anniversary of the foundation of the College by establishing the Aula Awards and donating £5,000 to the Charles Crawley Fund and £1,000 to the John and Danielle Lyons fund;
- helped finance the portraits of Professor Dean and Lord Maugham and also commissioned the portrait of Launcelot Fleming;
- to a memorial fund on the death of Professor Dean in 1961.

The Club has also been a long-standing supporter of the Trinity Hall Boat Club. Gifts include:

- a donation of five guineas to the Latham Boathouse in 1903;
- a weathervane, recently replaced during the Boathouse refurbishment as a personal donation from a Club member;
- a set of oars;
- a light pair;
- on the occasion of the THBC's centenary in 1927, replicas of the flags which were lost during the First World War, with silver plaques on the poles commemorating each of the sixteen Head of the River crews;
- marking the sexcentenary of the College in 1950 with a gift of a tub pair;
- contributed to the cost of printing the new history of the Boat Club which marked the centenary in 1987 of the THBC's annus mirabilis at Henley;

- celebrating the club's centenary in 1992 with the gift of a new eight.

The Club also gave a replica of the Founder's Cup to Dr Bond on his retirement as Master in 1929 and presented Professor Dean, who attended the Club's meetings regularly for over thirty years, with an inkstand with the coronation date mark on his retirement as Master and subsequently sent him a case of vintage port on his eightieth birthday.

The Club's 200th dinner took place in 2000 and, coinciding as it did with the College's 650th anniversary, was an occasion for particular celebration. This was not the first occasion on which the Aula Club has held a commemorative dinner. A set of specially engraved silver tuns was produced for the twentieth anniversary dinner, and a gift of furniture for Dr Eden's Room was made to mark the Club's fortieth year. The Club commemorated its centenary in 1992 by a dinner, at which it added to its collection of silver a model of a falcon, the Fearon family crest.

The Club has itself been the recipient of several gifts from individual members:

- In 1937, at a special dinner of the Club to celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of the THBC's annus mirabilis, the surviving members of the 1887 crews presented the Club with a silver rosewater dish.
- Basil Henderson presented the Club with an 18th-century tankard when he was in the chair in 1951
- a gavel was supplied by CA Potter in 1962
- Charles Crawley made a gift of the silver tun now used by the chairman when he was made an honorary member in 1984.
- John Fearon bequeathed to the Club a silver salver and a silver gilt replica of the standing cup and cover presented to Trinity Hall by Archbishop Matthew Parker in 1569;
- and a gift from Charles Brewin of a 1902 tun to be known as the Brewin Tun, since he felt as the club chairman has one for use at dinners the secretary should have one as well.

The Aula Club silver:

