

The Life of  
**Henry Francis Pelham**  
(1846 – 1907)

Camden Professor of Ancient History

and

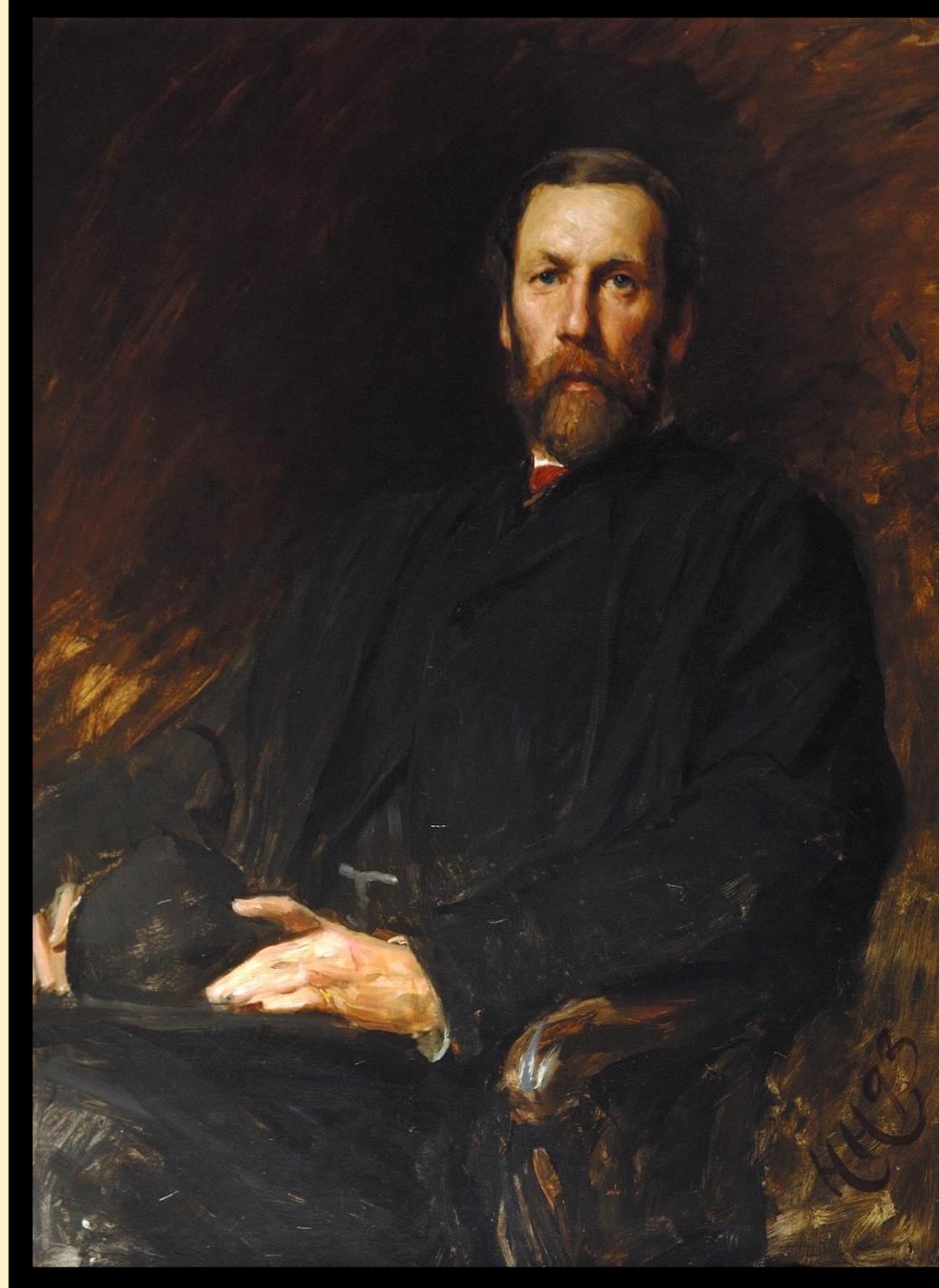
President of Trinity College

# Introduction

The Roman historian Henry Francis Pelham was Trinity's 19<sup>th</sup> President. He began and ended his Oxford career at the College, arriving in 1865 as an 18-year-old scholar, and dying in the President's Lodgings in 1907 at the early age of 60. In the years between his graduation and his election to the Presidency, he maintained a close connection with many Trinity friends, while holding a fellowship across the road at Exeter College from 1869, and as the Camden Professor of Ancient History, attached to Brasenose, from 1889.

This exhibition explores Henry Pelham's relationship with Trinity through administrative records, photographs, and letters; and it considers the impact of his unexpected death on the college community. We are very grateful to his great-granddaughter Catherine Bickmore for the loan of family photographs and other items which have been copied for the College Archive.

**Sir Hubert von Herkomer's 1893 portrait of Professor Pelham was bought by Trinity in 1908. The entire Governing body, 29 of his Trinity contemporaries, and 206 of 'his' undergraduates subscribed to raise the considerable purchase price of £350.**



# Young Henry

This is the earliest picture of Henry Pelham in the Trinity Archive, preserved in the collection of an undergraduate in the year above named John Hadow.

By the 1860s, collecting portrait photographs was a popular and relatively affordable pastime, and many Oxford undergraduates would exchange small headshots with their friends.

Henry seems to have settled easily and confidently into student society. He came from a privileged background and had done well at Harrow School. His father John Thomas Pelham was the Bishop of Norwich; John was also the second son of the Earl of Chichester.



570. Ep. Henricus Franciscus Pelham filius natus maximus Reverendi in Christo Patris Honorabilis Joannis Thomae Episcopi Norwicensis, natus apud Burghampton in comitatu Norfolk: et in Schola Harrovicensi litteris institutus aetatis circiter 18 admissus sum Scholaris die Aprilis 24<sup>o</sup>, 1865, sub tutamine Magistrorum Wayte, Cole, et Duckworth.

Electus Socius Coll. Exon 1869: postea Socius Coll. Oxon. & Prof. Cantabrigiae: deinde electus Praeses Coll. S. Trinitatis Kal. Oct. 1897.

## Admissus Sum

Henry Pelham was 18 when he wrote this entry in the Admissions Register. His handwriting seems very assured— although we note that he did not know the correct Latin ending for ‘of Norfolk’

Please scroll down for a transcript and translation.

MDCCLXV

*Ego Henricus Franciscus Pelham filius natu maximus Reverendi in Christo Patris Honorabilis Joannis Thomae Episcopi Norviciensis natus apud Burghapton in comitatu Norfolk: et in schola Harroviensi litteris institutus annorum circiter 18 admissus sum Scholaris die Aprilis 24<sup>o</sup> 1865, sub tutamine Magistrorum Wayte, Cole, et Duckworth.*

1865

*I, Henry Francis Pelham, eldest son of the Reverend Father in Christ, the Honourable John Thomas, Bishop of Norwich, born at Burghapton in the county of Norfolk and educated at Harrow School, aged 18, was admitted as a Scholar on 24 April 1865, under the tuition of Masters Wayte, Cole, and Duckworth.*

## A note on Henry Pelham's Tutors...

**Samuel Wayte** had been a fellow of Trinity since 1842. A patient and devoted tutor, he would seek out struggling undergraduates to offer additional tuition, and he continued to provide unpaid mathematical coaching after he was elected President in 1866.

**William Cole** had entered Trinity as a scholar in 1854. He was to follow the traditional Oxford career path, spending 11 years as a fellow and the rest of his days as the incumbent of a college living.

**Robinson Duckworth** took leave of absence from Trinity in 1866 in order to assume the post of tutor to Queen Victoria's youngest son Prince Leopold. His main claim to fame however is that one day in 1863 he went boating with his Christchurch friend Charles Dodgson. He is the Duck in *Alice in Wonderland*.

# How different from today...

Despite considerable development, this photograph of 1860s Trinity remains instantly recognizable today. The cottages are exactly that, lived in by college servants and others. The Chapel's windows are clear glazed, and the exterior stonework is already damaged by air pollution. Note the oval lawn – essential for carriages and deliveries by horse cart. In place of today's President's lodgings is the Bathurst Building: an undergraduate accommodation block demolished in 1886.





## College Rooms

The room register for Trinity Term 1865 records that Henry was assigned a set on the first floor of what is now Staircase 16, to the right of this photograph in John Hadow's album.

The next 5 years' registers are missing; but would you have wanted to swap?



## Play up! Play up!

Cricket was the first team sport to be played at Oxford, and this is the earliest known photograph of a Trinity XI, taken in the summer of 1868.

The College rented a field at Cowley, and a coach would be hired to transport the players to matches with their kit. We know nothing of the season's results, although it would have been highly unusual for an unsuccessful team to pose for a photograph.

Henry Pelham is at the centre of the back row. His companions are all Trinity undergraduates except for the slight figure front right. This is Robert Raper. He had graduated from Trinity in Henry's first term and was now a fellow of The Queen's College. Raper returned to Trinity as a fellow in 1870, and he and Henry remained lifelong friends.

# First Class

John Hadow also preserved this thoughtful studio portrait of Henry, perhaps exchanged as a keepsake in John's final term in the summer of 1868.

Henry himself excelled academically. On 17 June 1869 *The Times* reported on his exam success in Mods and Finals as well as in the competition for a fellowship at Exeter College.



H. F. Pelham. Trin. Oxon.

## UNIVERSITY INTELLIGENCE.

OXFORD, JUNE 16.

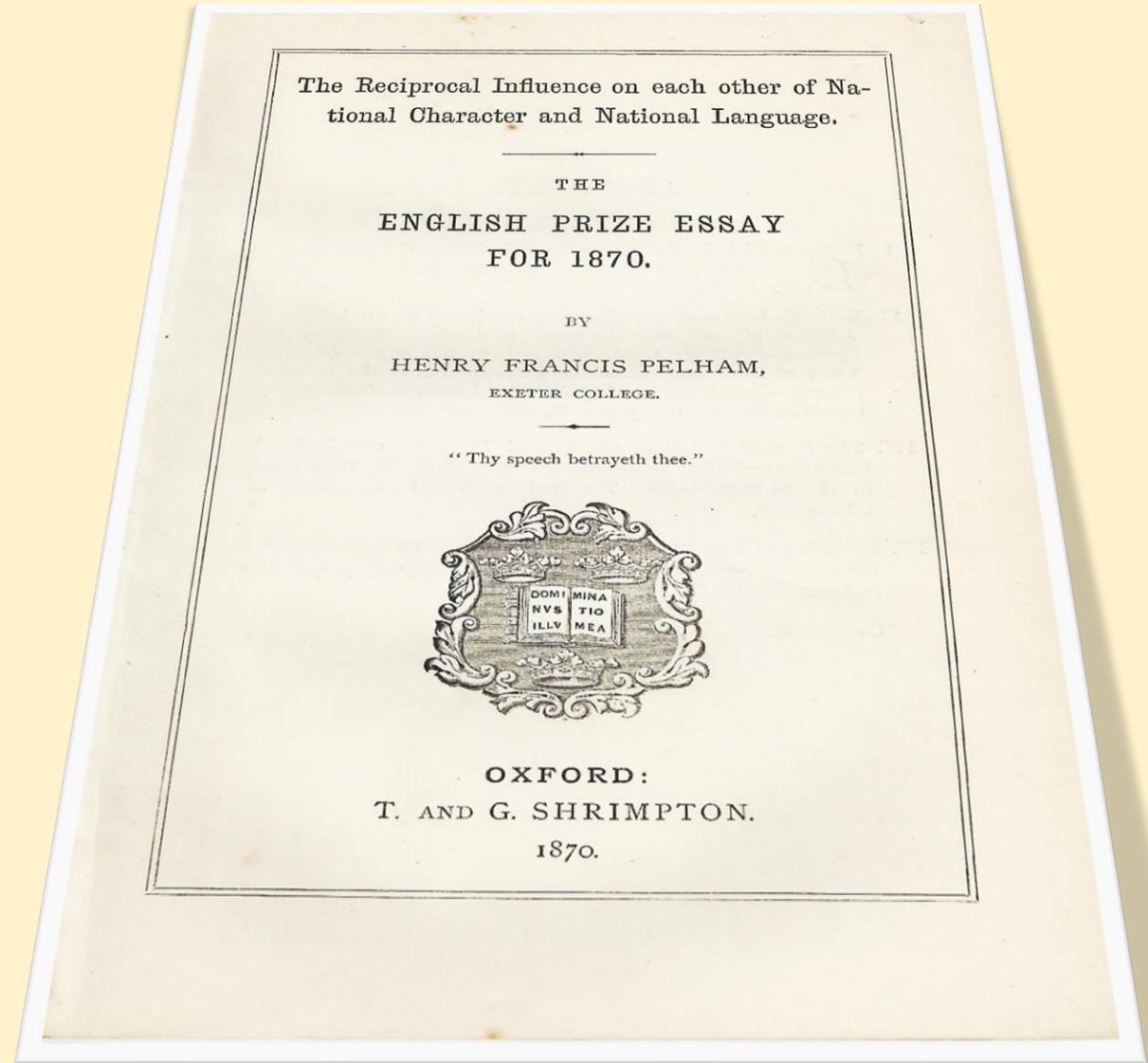
Mr. George Nutt, B.A., Scholar of New College, and Mr. H. T. Pelham, Scholar of Trinity, have been elected Fellows of Exeter College. Mr. Nutt obtained a First Class in Moderations in Trinity Term, 1866; also a First Class in the Final Classical School in Michaelmas Term, 1863. He gained the Gaisford Prize for Greek Verse in 1866, and a Craven Scholarship in the present term. Mr. Pelham obtained a First Class in Moderations in Michaelmas Term, 1866, and also a First Class in the Final Classical School in Trinity Term, 1869.

Mr. Richard Abney, B.A. of Exeter College, has been elected Fellow of Trinity College, Oxford.

# Prize Essay

In his first year at Exeter, Henry won the Chancellor's English Essay Prize with a remarkably prescient essay entitled 'The Reciprocal Influence on each other of National Character and National Language.'

The content of the essay was original and well-argued, and his writing style was fluent and lucid. These qualities soon made him a popular and successful tutor and lecturer.



# Family life

On 30 July 1873, Henry got married, an act which required him to relinquish his fellowship according to the ancient rules of Exeter College. He was however able to continue as a lecturer until he could be re-elected under the College's reformed Statutes of 1882.

Henry wife was Laura Priscilla, the third daughter of the Liberal politician, Sir Edward North Buxton. They set up home in North Oxford, where their first son Edward Henry – known in the family as Hal – was born on 20 December 1876.



# Heartbreak

Henry and Laura were to have five children. Tragically, their second son Arthur died in October 1883, aged 4 years and 8 months, and their eldest daughter Catherine in November 1894, aged 9 years and 2 months. Both were buried in St Sepulchre's Cemetery, where their names are engraved on their parents' tomb.



Edward Henry (Hal)  
(1876-1949)

Arthur John  
(1878-1883)



Herbert Sidney  
(1881-1926)

Catherine Harriet  
(1885-1894)



Laura Grace  
(1888-1980)

THE appointment of Mr. H. F. Pelham, of Exeter College, to the Camden Professorship of Ancient History at Oxford removes one of the abuses animadverted upon in the last number of the *Edinburgh Review*. When, in 1836, on the motion of Mr. Thorold Rogers, a return of the Oxford professorships was furnished to the House of Commons, stating the stipend of each professor, the number of lectures delivered by him, and the average attendance at each lecture, the then Camden Professor presented a somewhat sorry spectacle. "The Professor offers his teaching," he wrote, "but under present arrangements has no hearers." To which, as the *Edinburgh* reviewer says, he should have added, "He therefore does nothing, but under present arrangements draws £600 a year." But this was not all. Oxford was not the only place whence Canon Rawlinson drew pay for which he did no work. He also held a canonry at Canterbury, to which he some time ago added a rich London living. Whether the persistent attacks of a London evening paper have at last been crowned with success, or whether, as it may be more charitable to hope, the Canon's long-slumbering conscience has tardily asserted itself, may be matter of doubt. At any rate, it is satisfactory to know that at Oxford he has left room for a more active man, and that one of the most important chairs the University has to offer is now to be filled by one who will

## Professor

In 1890, Henry Pelham was appointed to Oxford's Camden Chair of Ancient History. This unidentified press cutting notes with approval that his 'article on "Rome" in the "Encyclopaedia Britannica" is bigger than some books and better than most,' and looks forward to undergraduates continuing to '[crowd] his lucid and admirably delivered lectures on Roman History?'

At any rate, he could only be better than his predecessor in the post George Rawlinson (Trinity College, 1838).

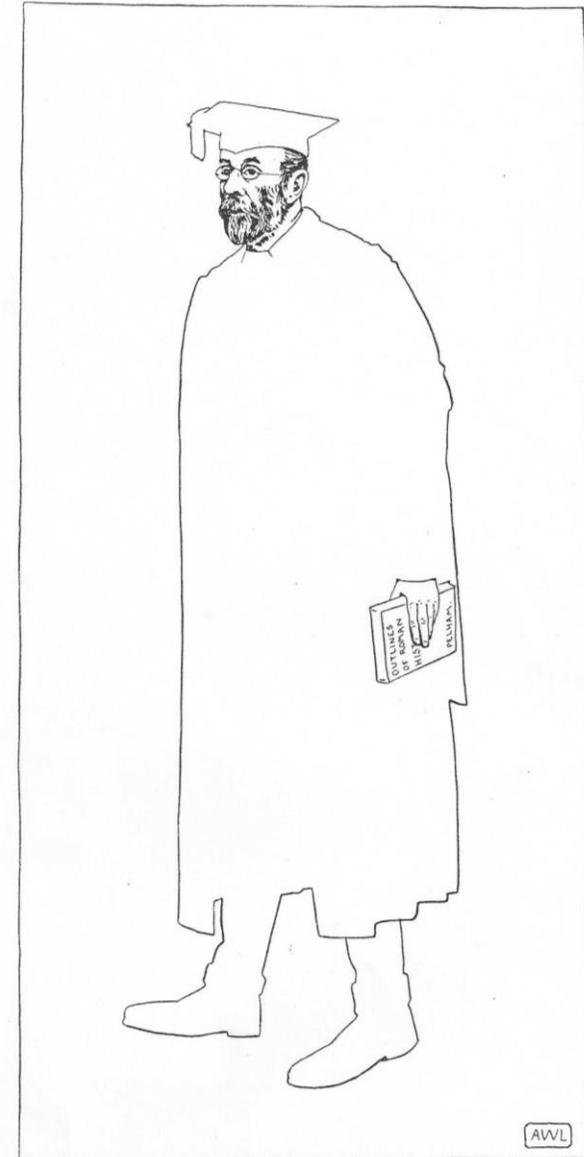
adorn it as well as be adorned by it. Mr. Pelham is not very widely known outside of Oxford, as he has never caught the publishing fever. His article on "Rome" in the "Encyclopaedia Britannica" is bigger than some books and better than most; but it would probably be accurate to say that he has never published a volume. In Oxford itself his fame and influence are alike great, and he is popularly supposed, like the patrician magistrates of Rome, to control the calendar; at least it has been asserted that the Easter vacation is sometimes lengthened, and the Christmas vacation correspondingly shortened, to allow Mr. Pelham a lengthy spring holiday in Rome. The undergraduate who, early in January, must bid adieu to dances and other seasonable festivities, and unwillingly take train to Oxford, does not bless Mr. Pelham. But, however this may be, no other reasons interfere with the new Professor's popularity. Undergraduates have hitherto crowded to his lucid and admirably delivered lectures on Roman history, and, though some who have made a name as college lecturers have soon lost it again as professors, this is hardly likely to be the case with Mr. Pelham.

# 'P-lh-m's Outlines'

The title of AWL's cartoon in the *Supplement to the Varsity* magazine in February 1903 is a play on his only published work, *Outlines of Roman History* (Percival and co, London, 1893).

Note that he is now wearing glasses. Henry Pelham was in his early 40s when he first developed eye trouble. In 1890 he was diagnosed with cataracts and underwent surgery. Although this was successful, he was never able to return to the long hours of research and reading that he had once enjoyed. He continued to lecture and to publish articles, but his planned longer work on the history of Rome never appeared, and he turned increasingly to administrative work, sitting – to good effect – on numerous boards and committees in Oxford and elsewhere. He was already closely involved in the work of Oxford's first College for Women, Somerville, since his appointment to the founding committee in 1879.

The *Outlines of Roman History* was based on his article on 'Rome,' written for the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*.



P-LH-M'S OUTLINES.

# Romeward Bound

Although there is nothing in the Trinity Archive relating to his work as an ancient historian, Henry Pelham was hugely influential in revitalising the subject in Britain. Recognising that Oxford had fallen seriously behind other European nations, he addressed the latest scientific and archaeological discoveries in his lectures, and was prominent in the foundation of the British School at Rome. There was a joke current at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century that Professor Pelham had caused the start of Hilary Term to be brought forwards in order to extend his annual Easter Vacation trip to Italy. The family archives include these passes as a delegate at the International Congress of Historical Sciences held in Rome in 1902 and 1903.



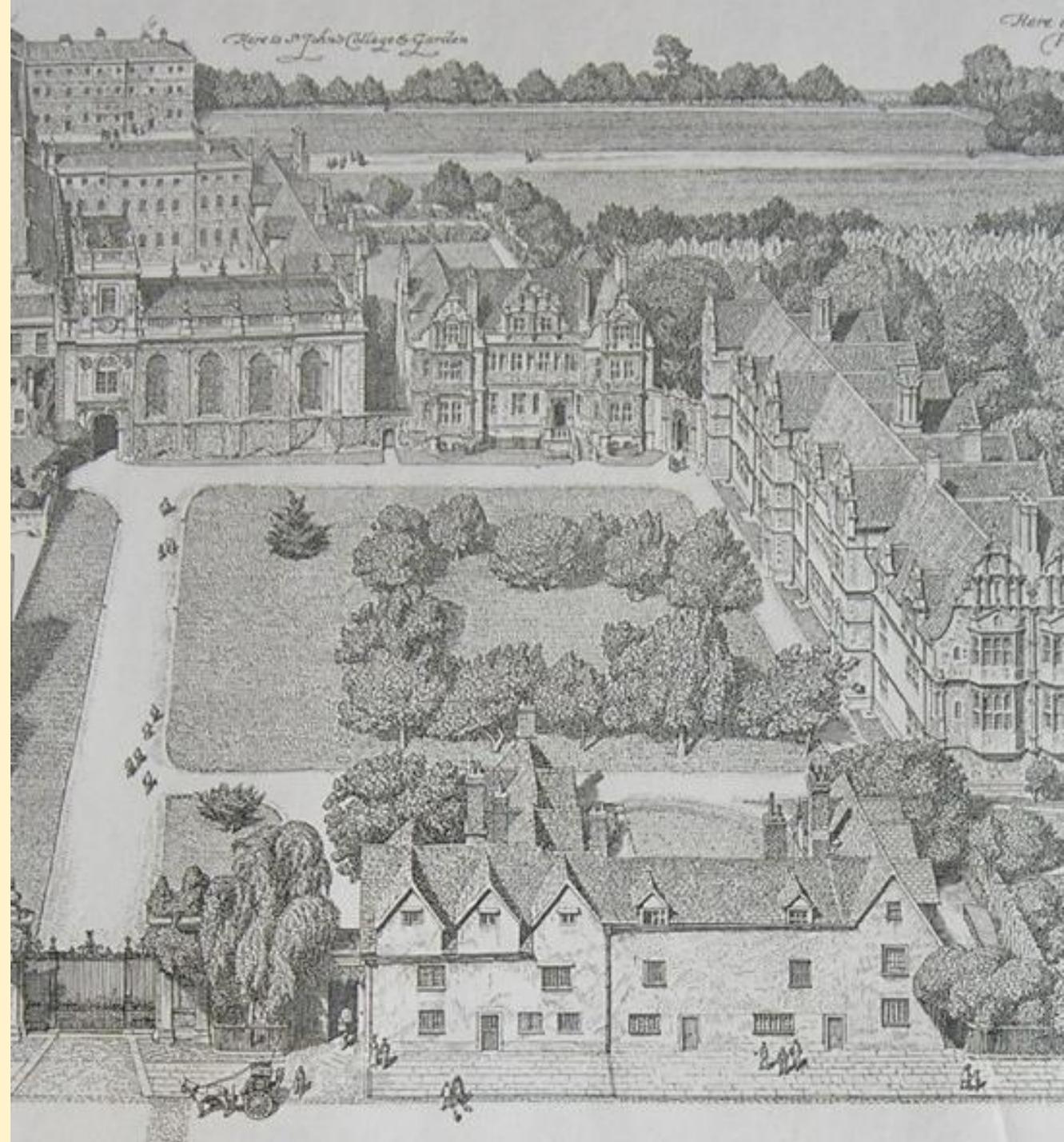
# President

Henry was elected President of his old College in September 1897. A vacancy had appeared unexpectedly, following the resignation of Henry Woods (his wife, the writer Margaret 'Daisy' Woods, having grown to detest the restricted life of an Oxford wife).

The Headship of a House offered an excellent base for Henry to deploy his considerable gifts for administration, without causing too much strain on his eyes.

Henry, Laura, and their youngest daughter Grace moved into the large and modern President's Lodgings, designed by Sir Thomas Jackson to stand adjacent to the Chapel in Trinity's recently completed Front Quadrangle.

This engraving of early 20<sup>th</sup>-century Trinity was made by Edmund Hort New in 1913.





## Head of House

This is Henry's first College Photograph, taken by the entrance to Staircase 14 in the summer of 1898. (It is quite clearly summer: besides the window boxes, many of the young men are wearing boaters with their jackets, waistcoats, ties, and boots.)

Henry sits at the centre with Robert Raper to his right. Holding the college offices of Senior Tutor and Junior Bursar, Raper was now one of the most influential figures in Trinity. Second from Henry's left with mortar board and short white beard is the Professor of Latin, Robinson Ellis.

# Minutiae

These three letters from the collection of Geoffrey Christie-Miller (1900) illustrate something of the President's administrative burden and also of his succinct style and efficiency.

A simple postcard to announce Christie-Miller's success in the entrance exam, and brief letters to authorize a fourth year reading for Honours and a dance on the eve of the Ball, might seem very little when compared to the complexities, spreadsheets and paperwork of life today. But the President was in sole charge of Admissions (some 50 undergraduates a year) and had no secretarial support.

The President's permission for a 'small dance' was given with some charmingly gentlemanly provisos – 'on the understanding that it will be really small and not go on very late or involve elaborate supper arrangements.'

*June 2. 1902*  
TRINITY COLLEGE,  
OXFORD.  
Dear Mr. Christie-Miller,  
The College will  
give leave for a small  
dance on the night before  
the Ball - on the understanding  
that it will be really small  
& not go on very late or  
involve elaborate supper  
arrangements.  
Yours truly  
Hurst Pelham

From The PRESIDENT, Trinity College, Oxford.  
I have the pleasure of  
informing you that you have  
passed the Entrance  
Examination.  
Yours truly  
Hurst Pelham

Oct 30. 1902  
TRINITY COLLEGE,  
OXFORD.  
Dear Mr Christie-Miller,  
The College will  
give you leave to  
stay up for a  
4<sup>th</sup> year  
Yours truly  
Hurst Pelham

# Howzat?!

One of the most significant and long-lasting achievements of Henry Pelham's Presidency – at least from the undergraduate perspective – was the purchase of a new Cricket Ground.

The President's Appeal circular of July 1898 pointed out the considerable advantages of Trinity owning a single ground for cricket, [rugby] football, and lawn tennis. Magdalen College had agreed to sell a ten-and-a-half-acre field at Mesopotamia that would provide far better conditions than the soggy pitch at Cowley. Moreover, 'one central ground would help to bring men of various tastes together [and] maintain the good comradeship which has been characteristic of the College.'

Henry headed the list of donors with a generous cheque for £50.

## Trinity College, Oxford.

### THE NEW CRICKET GROUND.

DEAR SIR,

The desirability of acquiring a ground which should serve as both cricket and football ground, and on which room might also be found for other games, has long been felt. The existing cricket ground at Cowley is far too small for this purpose; and it is moreover doubtful how long even the Cricket Club will be able to remain there, now that the neighbourhood is being rapidly built over, and that several Colleges have moved to grounds nearer Oxford. The field at present rented for football is wholly unsuitable, being often under water, and always soft and dead. For lawn-tennis, courts are hired on the Running Ground on the Iffley Road.

The advantages of concentrating all the principal College games in one place on a ground belonging to the College, and nearer to Oxford, are very great. There would be a saving of expense. The one central ground would help to bring men of various tastes together, and to maintain the good comradeship which has been characteristic of the College. It would also make it easier to have more in-college games and second-eleven matches, so that a larger number of men would thus have a chance of playing.

During several years the President and Fellows have been endeavouring to secure a suitable ground. They have now agreed with Magdalen College for the purchase of part of a large field, lying to the left of the path leading from Mesopotamia to the Marston Road. The field runs down to the Cherwell, but is considerably above the highest flood level. The part which the College proposes to purchase is ten and a half acres in extent. It has been examined by experts, and approved as suitable for cricket. There will be plenty of room both for football and lawn-tennis. The ground is considerably nearer to the College than the present cricket ground, and the distance would be greatly reduced by the construction of a path leading directly across the meadows from Holywell to the Cherwell.

The College, assisted by a subscription of £500 from the Fellows, is able to purchase the ten and a half acres. But for the laying out of the ground, and the erection of a pavilion, a further sum of about £1,200 will be required.

For this sum we appeal to the liberality of Trinity men.

Donations may be sent to any of the undersigned, or may be paid into the 'Trinity College Cricket Ground Account,' at Messrs. Parsons, Old Bank, Oxford.

HENRY F. PELHAM.

R. W. RAPER.

C. CANNAN.

G. E. BURNETT-STUART,  
*Senior Commoner.*

F. B. ELLIOT,  
*Capt. T. C. B. C.*

F. H. LATHAM,  
*Capt. T. C. C. C.*

D. MARSHALL,  
*Capt. T. C. A. F. C.*

A. M. CONNELL,  
*Capt. T. C. R. U. F. C.*

TRINITY COLLEGE, OXFORD,  
July 1, 1898.

# The Field of Victory

The President's investment in sport paid off. In 1906, Trinity provided eight of the victorious Oxford XV in the Varsity match. The Captain, Basil Cozens-Hardy (1904), subsequently presented the winning match ball to the College.

A note on the score: In 1906 it was 3 points for a try, and 5 for a goal (a converted try). Oxford won by four tries to one try and a goal.





## At home with the Pelhams

The President's drawing room has two fireplaces, and windows looking North into the private garden behind, and South into the Quad.

This photograph from the family collection shows ornate and comfortable furnishings and numerous *objets d'art*, typical of upper-class homes at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century.

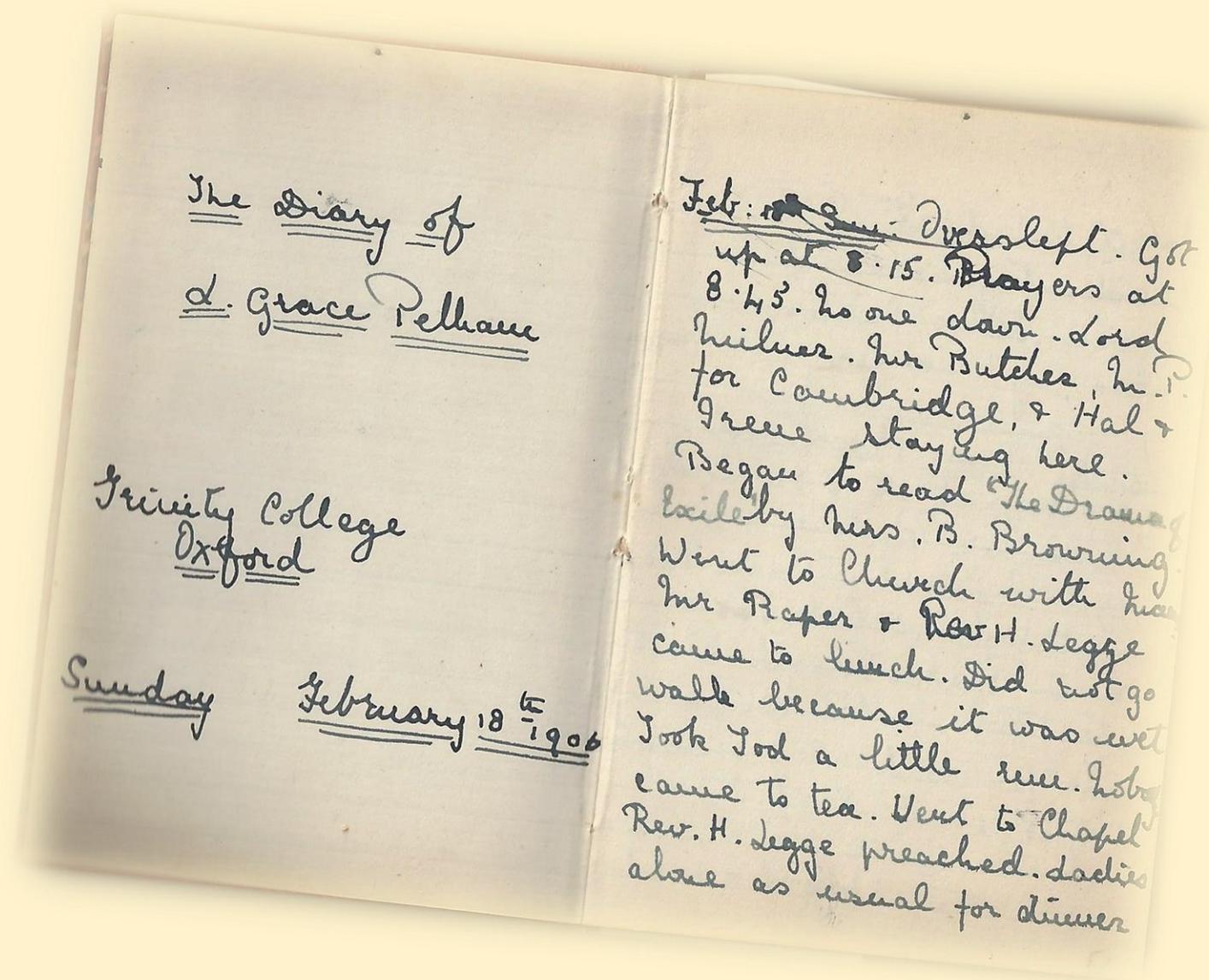
# Dear Diary...

On 18 February 1906, Grace Pelham started a diary. She was 17.

Although her father had done so much to foster the education of women in Oxford through the founding of Somerville College, his daughter lived a more constrained life, as a companion to her mother and an additional hostess in the Lodgings.

That Sunday she attended two church services, presumably at Trinity's parish of St Mary Magdalen's on St Giles in the morning, and Evensong in the College Chapel, where she and her mother would have sat invisibly in the hidden pew by the altar. The preacher Hugh Legge (1888) ran the College Mission in the East End of London. Tod was Grace's pet dog.

Note the 'Ladies alone as usual for dinner.' During term, Henry and any male guests dined in Hall.





## Dinner in Hall

Numerous members of College purchased prints of this photograph of the 1905 Trinity Monday feast. Henry stands at the centre of High Table, beneath the Founder's portrait.

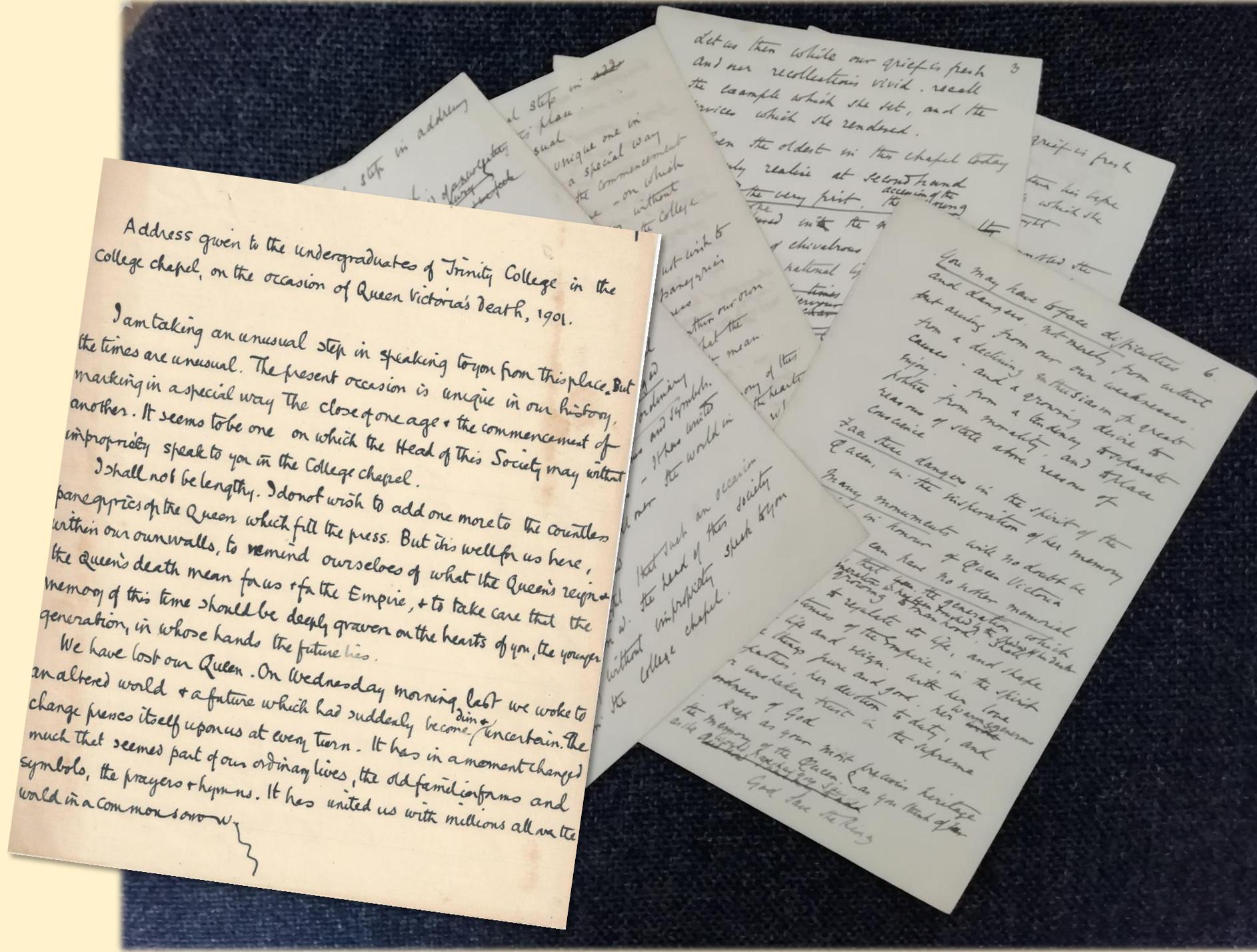
Note that Henry is wearing a black tie. According to Langford Price (scholar 1881) he did so 'somewhat ostentatiously... to bring an element of more comfortable less rigid informality into the proceedings.'

# The Death of Queen Victoria

The most memorable national event of the Pelham Presidency was the death of Queen Victoria on 22 January 1901.

The Trinity community came together for Henry's address in the Chapel. He got through numerous drafts as he sought to do justice to 'the close of one age and the commencement of another.'

It is not known in whose hand this fair copy is written.



Address given to the undergraduates of Trinity College in the College chapel, on the occasion of Queen Victoria's Death, 1901.

I am taking an unusual step in speaking to you from this place. But the times are unusual. The present occasion is unique in our history, marking in a special way the close of one age & the commencement of another. It seems to be one on which the Head of this Society may without impropriety speak to you in the College chapel.

I shall not be lengthy. I do not wish to add one more to the countless panegyrics of the Queen which fill the press. But it is well for us here, within our own walls, to remind ourselves of what the Queen's reign & the Queen's death mean for us & for the Empire, & to take care that the memory of this time should be deeply graven on the hearts of you, the younger generation, in whose hands the future lies.

We have lost our Queen. On Wednesday morning last we woke to an altered world & a future which had suddenly become uncertain. The change presses itself upon us at every turn. It has in a moment changed much that seemed part of our ordinary lives, the old familiar forms and symbols, the prayers & hymns. It has united us with millions all over the world in a common sorrow.

step in address  
al steps in  
to place  
seal  
Unique one in  
a special way  
the commencement  
- on which  
without  
the College

let us then while our grief is fresh  
(and our recollections vivid, recall  
the example which she set, and the  
service which she rendered.

the oldest in the chapel today  
only realize at second hand  
the very first,  
the first in the  
of chivalrous  
national by  
times  
urgency  
mean  
of this  
the hearts  
w/

most wish to  
panegyric  
within our own  
mean  
of this  
the hearts  
w/

God has the  
the memory of the Queen  
will be  
God has the

grief is fresh  
turn his hope  
which she  
the

You may have before difficulties  
and dangers, not nearly from what  
but arising from our own weakness,  
from a declining in the spirit of the  
cause, and a growing desire to  
hurry from a tenacity of tradition  
rather than from a sense of  
reason of still above reasons of  
conscience

Many monuments will no doubt be  
erected in honor of Queen Victoria  
can have no other memorial  
But you the generation which  
inspired & shaped the spirit which  
giving to the world, shall  
& replicate its life, and hope  
to the Empire, in the spirit  
of life and reign. With her love  
& deep faith and god, her  
faith, her devotion to duty, and  
in her hidden trust in the supreme  
presence of God  
Keep so your with Britain's heritage  
the memory of the Queen as you think of her  
with affection & reverence  
God has the

6.

# Death of the President

Henry was taken ill on Boxing Day 1906. His last public appearance had been the previous day at the Cathedral in his role as pro-Vice Chancellor. Despite the best efforts of his doctors, he succumbed to heart failure on Tuesday 12 February.

The college archive has a faded copy of a diary kept by the Australian James Walker (Rhodes Scholar 1904). He heard the news on his return from a day out in London.

February 13 was James's 22<sup>nd</sup> birthday. He recorded the extraordinary JCR meeting as the student body considered an appropriate response.

went to the Dressing Club but worked from 3.30pm to 4.30pm and from 5.30pm to 6.45pm. After dinner in Hall there was a meeting in the Common Room to deal with the matter of the President's death and funeral. There was a record attendance and MacSwinnery as the senior undergraduate presided. It was decided that the College should send a wreath and a letter of condolence to Mrs Pelham. After some of the funeral arrangements had been announced the meeting adjourned and I returned to my room to put in 1 1/2 hours work. During the evening a telegram from the Rogers family arrived containing birthday greetings. Having completed 7 hours' reading for the day I set to work on my

*"After dinner in Hall there was a meeting in the Common Room to deal with the matter of the President's death and funeral. There was a record attendance and MacSwinnery as the senior undergraduate presided. It was decided that the College [ie the JCR] should send a wreath and a letter of condolence to Mrs Pelham. After some of the funeral arrangements had been announced the meeting adjourned and I returned to my room to put in 1 1/2 hours work. During the evening a telegram from the Rogers family arrived containing birthday greetings."*



## Funerary Hatchment

As a college head who died in office, Henry Pelham was entitled to have his arms and those of Trinity displayed on the wall of his house. Measuring approximately four feet across, the wooden panel must have been painted hastily, but after lying forgotten in a storeroom beneath the lodgings for three-quarters of a century before being removed to the safety of the Picture Store, it remains in remarkably good condition today.

The Pelham family crest – ‘a peacock in its pride argent’ – stands above the shield, while the motto below translates as *The love of my Country prevails*. To the left are the arms of Trinity’s Founder Sir Thomas Pope, and on the right, those of the Earls of Chichester.

# The Funeral

Henry's funeral was held three days after his death, on Friday 15 February 1907. The Vice-Chancellor and proctors led the procession from the Lodgings to the University Church of St Mary the Virgin, followed by the Governing Body of Brasenose then the members of Trinity College arranged according to their academic rank. The college servants walked either side of the hearse, and the family and other mourners followed behind in carriages.

James Walker recorded in his diary that the Trinity undergraduates filled the North gallery of the Church, while 'the girls from Somerville were strongly in evidence in the East gallery.' The procession lined up in reverse order to walk to St Sepulchre's Cemetery, where 'the undergraduates lined the path from the gate to the grave while the coffin and mourners passed through.'

TRINITY COLLEGE, OXFORD

—  
IN MEMORY OF

**HENRY FRANCIS PELHAM, M.A.**

CAMDEN PROFESSOR OF ANCIENT HISTORY

PRESIDENT OF THE COLLEGE

DIED FEBRUARY 12, 1907

AGED 60

TRINITY COLLEGE, OXFORD  
February 15, 1907

## ORDER OF PROCESSION

*From the College to St. Mary's Church*  
The Vice-Chancellor and Proctors.

The Principal and Fellows of Brasenose College.  
Undergraduate Commoners of the College.

The Scholars and Exhibitioners.  
Bachelors and Masters of Arts and other Graduates.

The Fellows.  
College Servants. College Servants.

### THE HEARSE.

The Mourners in Carriages.

*From St. Mary's Church to St. Sepulchre's Cemetery*  
The College Procession as before.

### THE HEARSE.

The Mourners.

The Vice-Chancellor and Proctors.  
Other Members of the University, according to their Degrees.  
Other friends.

# In Memoriam

It fell to Trinity's Senior Tutor, Herbert Blakiston, to speak in Chapel on the Sunday after Henry's funeral. Blakiston remembered the late President's 'dignified emotion' following the death of Queen Victoria, and focused on Henry's Christian faith and the 'visible evidence of his noble character.'

Following a decision by Robert Raper not to accept the sudden vacancy, Blakiston was to succeed Pelham as President, a position which held for the next 31 years.

## AN ADDRESS IN MEMORY OF HENRY FRANCIS PELHAM, M.A.,

(President of Trinity College and Camden Professor of Ancient History),

Delivered in the College Chapel, February 17th, 1907,

by the Rev. Herbert E. D. Blakiston, B.D.,

Senior Tutor and Junior Bursar of the College.

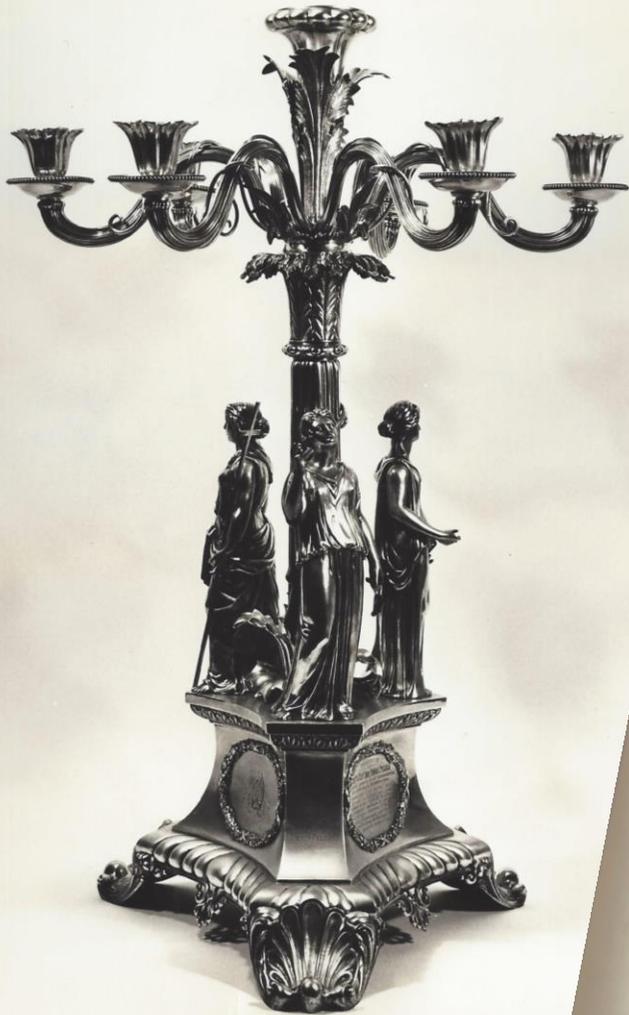
THIS is not intended to be a sermon, and I take no text to introduce it, appropriate as some of the famous funeral texts, the lofty phrases applied to Abner, or David, or Elijah, would be on such an occasion. But it is more appropriate to the President's memory to speak of him most simply, even as he spoke to us, with a dignified emotion which none of his then audience will ever forget, on the death of the late Queen. Some such "laudation" is custom, custom of profound antiquity; and whatever may be its origin, custom is right and honourable when it has grown and humanised with the wisdom and morality of the race. So our object in this place is, in effect, not to pay honour to the mortal mind, to which even in life anything that passes just appreciation is seldom helpful or valued; but to praise the name of God in thankfulness for His mercy and truth, to which the soul can bear steadier witness when it is supported by the visible evidence of a noble character.

For it is no longer loss but gain, it is a life and not a death, that we as Christians are commemorating to-day, even in the face of a sudden and unexpected change. The death of the body cannot, does not, 'close all.' In the eternal, Death is only the summons to the other world of the personality as it stands at this or that stage of its development. Yes, if you look through the veils of the Apocalypse to the parables and the farewell words, clear enough however reserved, of our Lord Jesus Christ, teaching with authority, you will find this true. For the good and wise servant, death is the advancement by the Master to less limited intelligence, less hampered activities—in short, to fuller trust. The reward of faithful service is not dismissal, but promotion: and therein lies the gain to him, which is at the same time our deep and lasting loss.

# Two Very Different Memorials

This highly elaborate candelabrum, one of the largest pieces in Trinity's silver collection, is not only a highly visible reminder of a past President, but also a direct link to the Pelham family. It was given to Henry's father John by his parishioners in Marylebone when he was appointed to the See of Norwich in 1857. Laura Pelham donated it to Trinity in John's memory when she and Grace departed the Lodgings for a new home in North Oxford.

Meanwhile, a volume of Henry Pelham's *Essays on Roman History* was published in 1911 with a biographical note by the editor Francis Haverfield, who had succeeded Henry in the Camden professorship. Reproduced from sources including the *Royal Historical Society*, the *Essays* form a permanent and accessible record of the breadth and depth of his scholarship.



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# 'The Most Distinguished of Trinity's Presidents'

A final insightful summary of Henry Pelham's life comes from the economist Langford Price (scholar 1881) who wrote a candid and observant memoir of his years in Oxford. He had attended Henry Pelham's lectures as a young man and knew him too in later life.

<sup>Chac</sup> the only external lectures I attended besides those of Pelham  
<sup>I was</sup> when reading for Greats were Butcher's when <sup>I was</sup> preparing for Moderations.  
Both had large audiences. Pelham I knew afterwards as President of  
Trinity. He was <sup>an</sup> ~~an~~ <sup>and indeed commanding</sup> influential speaker in Congregation and Convoca-  
tion, although he might <sup>stress unduly</sup> ~~impress~~ <sup>evident belief on his part</sup> the impression that anyone opposing him  
must be a fool if not a knave. <sup>At the gaudy on</sup> Trinity Monday somewhat ~~ostentatious~~  
(11)

ostentatiously he wore a black instead of a white tie, I suppose, <sup>to</sup>  
~~bring in~~ <sup>more comfortable less rigid</sup> an element of informality into <sup>the proceedings</sup>; <sup>and he</sup>  
<sup>as he had conceived and he also</sup> discarded in the street the hitherto conventional attire of a College  
Head. But none the less unmistakably he maintained the aristocratic bear-  
ing of one connected with high social rank. <sup>That</sup> Sprung from a family, which <sup>was properly</sup> once  
had handled affairs of State and Church, his savoir faire was instinctive. Yet his Liberalism was ~~not~~ firm and comprehensive. His limited output <sup>published</sup>  
~~did not~~ represent his ~~own~~ <sup>zealous</sup> study persisting through vaca-  
tions, or his easy but strong grasp <sup>of confirmed results</sup> of the bold fresh  
research of others in foreign countries such as ~~Germany~~, <sup>Spain</sup>

Some competent judges held, <sup>have</sup> <sup>furnishing weighty reasons for their verdict</sup> that he was the most distinguished of  
Trinity's Presidents. <sup>He was certainly an outstanding personage</sup> To Butcher, whose lectures in their different ~~xx~~  
I honestly believe, because

*'Pelham I knew afterwards as President of Trinity. He was an influential and indeed commanding speaker in Congregation and Convocation, although he might stress unduly evident belief on his part that anyone opposing him must be a fool if not a knave. At the gaudy on Trinity Monday somewhat ostentatiously he wore a black instead of a white tie. That I suppose, was purposely to bring an element of comfortable less rigid informality into the proceedings: moulded too formally as he conceived; and he also discarded in the street the hitherto conventional sombre attire of a College Head. But none the less unmistakably he maintained the aristocratic bearing of one connected with high social rank. Sprung from a family which once had handled affairs of State and Church, his savoir faire was instinctive. Yet his Liberalism was firm and comprehensive. His limited output published did not represent his zealous study persisting through vacations, or his easy but strong grasp of the bold fresh research of others in foreign countries such as Germany.'*

*'Some competent judges have held, furnishing weighty reasons for their verdict, that he was the most distinguished of Trinity's Presidents. He was certainly an outstanding personage.'*