

VENUES

Centenary Minute No 3 – May 2003

The Club has met in many locations over the years. The first meeting was held on November 15, 1902, in the assembly room of the Harvard Union at Cambridge where it met another 11 times over the years. Many of the early meetings, 25 in total, were held in the homes of members, particularly at Beacon Street, Commonwealth Avenue, Newbury Street and Brattle Street addresses. Clubs were, and continue to be, the most common venue. Some of these are no more or have moved. Eight meetings were held at the Boston Athletic Association on Exeter Street, one at the Colonial Club in Cambridge, three at the Exchange Club on Milk Street, two at the MIT Faculty Club, one at the St Botolph Club on Commonwealth Avenue, two at the Tavern Club in Boylston Place, one at the Union Club on Park Street and 23 at the University Club then at 270 Beacon Street. A hotel was used only once, the Hotel Brunswick in Boston. Other places that hosted the Club: Three at The Fogg Art Museum, two at Horticultural Hall, and one each at Huntington Hall and the Legion of Honor Hall, 200 Huntington Avenue. From the day of its opening in November 1913, the Harvard Club has by far been the most common meeting place. We met there first on the evening of November 28th, 1913, when Professor Roland B. Dixon spoke on "Twelve Hundred Miles through the Northern Himalayas." Counting tonight, we have met here 631 times (which represents 85% of the meetings), in recent years usually in this room, the Massachusetts Room, but in the past most often next door in the Aesculapian Room the walls of which for much of that time were decorated with animal heads, some of which no doubt were

provided by Club members. It is unlikely that any group has convened in this building more often or started doing so earlier than the Harvard Travellers Club.

Possibly the most interesting venue—given its close connection to the Club—was the Institute of Geographical Exploration where we met a total of 13 times between 1931 and 1949. The speaker at the first gathering, which celebrated the opening of the building, was Professor A. Hamilton Rice who spoke on “Explorations in South America.” Professor Rice was a past president of the Club and a Club Medalist. He also paid for the building which still stands at 2 Divinity Avenue. Rice offered to foot the bill for the Institute if he was named its Director and appointed a professor. He could afford it: his wife was the former Eleanor Elkins Widener. The architect of the building was Horace Trumbauer who, not coincidentally was the designer of Widener Library. Harvard closed the Institute in 1952 and the building now houses the Harvard-Yenching Library and other non-geographical departments and offices. Earlier, when President Conant declared that ‘geography is not a university subject,’ Rice withdrew his support and went back to his wife’s 65-room Newport cottage in his chauffeured blue Rolls Royce. And to this day the ‘world’s greatest university’ lacks a geography department. Perhaps our most distinguished member today—Bradford Washburn—was a student of Rice’s and was later assistant director of the Institute before going to the Museum of Science. It’s been said that on Rice’s last expedition to South America in 1924-25, short wave radio was used for the first time on an expedition, so too aerial photography resulting in the first map of a large area made from the air.

Harvard Club	641	87%
University Club	23	3%
Institute of Geographical Exploration	13	2%
Harvard Union	12	2%
Boston Athletic Association	8	1%
Fogg Art Museum	3	
Exchange Club	3	
Edward J. Holmes House	3	
Theodore Lyman House	3	
Edwin H. Abbot House	2	
Samuel Cabot House	2	
John C. Phillips House	2	
Horticultural Hall	2	
MIT Faculty Club	2	
Tavern Club	2	
Colonial Club	1	
Club of Odd Volumes	1	
Hotel Brunswick	1	
Huntington Hall	1	
Legion of Honor Hall	1	
St. Botolph Club	1	
Union Club	1	
H. L. Burrell House	1	
T. W. Thorndike House	1	
Thomas M. Rotch House	1	
George B. Dorr House	1	
A. Lawrence Rotch House	1	
Amos R. Little House	1	
Charles Jackson House	1	
Edward W. Hutchins House	1	
John L. Bremer House	1	
Joseph G. Thorp House	1	
Wallace Pierce House	1	
Albert B. Hart House	1	
Richard H. Dana House	1	
Private Houses		22 3%
TOTAL	741	100%
Unknown	9	

GRAND TOTAL

750