Recollections of Trinity College Dublin (October 1957-October 1961)

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It was almost preordained that I would go to Trinity College Dublin after high school. It was the default option for people like me at that time. I had several friends who were students there. In addition, two of my cousins had recently taken bachelor's and graduate degrees in chemistry[1]. Apart from my mother's brother Hugh Charlton, who had graduated BSc in Civil Engineering in South Africa, we were the first generation of the family to go to universities, though my father and two of his brothers had been apprentices and studied through City and Guilds, Belfast.

In spite of its austere aura in those days and its rich history, admission to Trinity College was relatively easy, partly because its main source of students in those days was the small non-Catholic population of Ireland. While at St Andrew's I had taken the "Trinity Entrance" or Matriculation examination in 5th form and in the following year had just missed getting a "Junior Exhibition", a kind of competetive scholarship.

Catholics were quasi-forbidden by their bishops to go to Trinity College but some were more inclined to grant permission than others. I once came across this rhyme, written in a secondhand copy of Donleavy's "The Ginger Man":

"A young man may loot
rape, murder and shoot,
and even have carnal knowledge.
But, however depraved,
his soul will be saved
if he stays out of Trinity College."

There were about 3000 students when I went there. Substantial minorities came from Northern Ireland and from English "Public Schools", Trinity being looked upon by many such people as a socially acceptable alternative to Oxford and Cambridge. The atmosphere was between that of a Cambridge or Oxford college and an American liberal arts college.

Of course, in the sixty years since I studied there, many things have changed. Ireland has prospered, Trinity has become a much larger university and its financial condition has improved beyond measure.

Trinity was like a small independent state in the centre of Dublin and was not the open thoroughfare that it is today. Every night at 10pm the heavy front gate was closed and isolation was complete. One could then imagine one was back in the

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[1] . See: https://www.theguardian.com/science/2011/may/11/david-jenkinson-obituary.
https://iris.ucl.ac.uk/iris/browse/profile?upi=DHJEN87 *(*Donald Jenkinson*)*

eighteenth century. The "porters" who kept guard, the equivalent of campus police today, wore an ancient style of uniform with jockey caps.
The College Postman "Bob" had a remarkable memory and needed only to ask each of the 400 or so resident students his name once.

Many of the buildings are beautiful and date from the mid-18th Century. They had been paid for by the then semi-independent Irish Parliament out of budgetary surpluses (otherwise the money would have been sent to the Exchequer in London). The library is a very famous one, entitled to a copy of every book published in the British Isles. Students could not actually borrow the books but had to read them in the Reading Room. Usually one looked up an item in the hundreds of massive Catalogue volumes, full of pasted slips, and handed in a yellow slip with the call number at the desk. Unless it was in frequent demand, it would appear half an hour later, after being sent from the stacks in the main library building through a chute to the Reading Room. The famous "Book of Kells" and other early Irish mss were on display in the impressive "Long Room" and access was then free of charge to all.

The first day at the University I went to see my assigned tutor, AH Gregg of the Physics Department. One's tutor was a very nominal appointment – a person one saw about once per year, if that. There was no real tutoring at all! I told Gregg that I was undecided as to whether to study Natural Sciences or Economics! He pushed me towards the former! In fact, because my cousins had studied science at Trinity before me and science was then the academic flavour of the moment, it was the default option.

I lived at home for my first two years, only a few km away. I could commute by bicycle or bus and sometimes came in with my father, who worked in the centre of town.

The three lecture terms (Michaelmas, Hilary and Trinity) were very short – about 8 weeks each, leaving a lot of time for other activities. The months of August and September in the long vacation were when I did the most studying in preparation for the exams that were held around the beginning of October, just before the new term.

Mathematics

I commenced by taking two Honours courses, Natural Sciences and Mathematics [The alternative was General Studies, also known as "Pass Arts"]. Also taking both courses were John Miller and Isaac Bernstein who became close friends. Isaac had won an entrance scholarship in maths but during his four years as an undergraduate his thoughts turned more to religion and he obtained a 3rd class maths degree in the end. He eventually became a highly controversial Rabbi. John Miller remains one of my oldest friends and was ultimately on the TCD faculty. Cecil Graham, who studied mathematics only, ended up as a Mathematics professor at Simon Fraser University. Both the maths and physics departments were very small and were then at what must have been their intellectual nadirs [for the situation in Physics see McBrierty, V.J, *ETS Walton*, TCD Press & Physics

Dept of TCD, 2003, p. 55]. A great part of the problem was that the departments tended to hire their own graduates, so the fresh ideas were lacking. Whereas there had been some excellent researchers on the faculty during the 19th century, there were few in the 20th and the good ones tended to move to more active places in other countries.

The first year lecturers in maths were Meredith, Allen and Bass. I found only the latter to be a good lecturer and at all inspiring. Meredith was very eccentric and his lectures seemed chaotic. I discovered that the most successful mathematics students were taking lessons outside the University with a private tutor, VW Graham, almost a necessity in the absence of any tutorial system. I wish I had found this out earlier and made use of him myself. The only checks on progress were exams at the end of the 2nd and third terms, which I managed to pass successfully. The text books that we used were G.H. Hardy's Pure Mathematics, Ferrar's Algebra and his Convergence. Mechanics was based on Sommerfeld's book, a great improvement on the old Lamb and Ramsey textbooks that had been in use up to then.

The annual examination was by far the most important one and was held at the end of the Summer vacation. The honor students would return to campus a couple of months before the exams and go over the notes they had taken during the year. To practise, we would have copies of exam papers from previous years, then formally printed and sold. Each student would try to solve the problems and swap solutions with his or her friends. I used to find that about 5 hours per day was the maximum I could take at this kind of intense work.

Once when Bass was lecturing he was doing one of those ladder-against-a-wall statics problems and said "Let us neglect friction" - whereupon a sash window suddenly slid down and we all laughed. "What is so funny, gentlemen", he said in his Viennese accent. On another occasion we had an extra session and took over a classroom that was actually due to be occupied by a philosophy lecturer, another Viennese. When this person realized what had happened and remonstrated with Bass, the latter replied "Well, if Diogenes could philosophise in a tub, you can philosophise on the stairs". They nearly came to blows.

Right: Aged about 19

In the second year we had lectures on "Pure Mathematics" (analysis) from the Head of Department, Broderick. We used classical French texts such as the Cours d'Analyse of Goursat and de la Vallée Poussin. He had a tendency to lecture for much longer than the allotted 1½ hours and sometimes we would all move back one row at a time when he was facing the blackboard. When he noticed, he would consult his pocket watch and apologise for going on for so long. I also recollect boring lectures on homogeneous coordinate geometry and rather more interesting ones on algebra (determinants and matrices, theory of equations etc). Unfortunately by concentrating on Physics and Chemistry for the Foundation Scholarship exams I fell behind in mathematics and had to give up at the end of the second year,

though I did attend some applied maths (classical theoretical physics) lectures given by AJ McConnell, the Provost or head of the College. Allen often did not appear for 9am lectures, and we would find a note on the door "Dr Allen presents his compliments and regrets that he will be unable to attend the Senior Freshman class this morning". On the last lecture day of term, we students put a notice on the door saying "The Senior Freshman class presents their compliments and regrets that they will be unable to attend Dr Allen's lecture this morning". Of course, he was furious but couldn't say anything! I think Allen was eventually forced to resign, a very unusual thing for a Fellow of the College.

The Maths Department was in No 39, New Square. The classrooms were usually very cold, though sometimes heated with coal fires.

Natural Sciences

In Natural Sciences one had to take three subjects in the freshman years. I chose Physics, Chemistry and Maths but because I was doing the Honours Maths degree in addition I did not have to attend the "science maths" lectures. One of my friends, Guy Milner, had a knack for taking coherent notes even from lecturers like Meredith and I borrowed them to prepare myself for the science maths exams. Most students had to take a few arts subjects to broaden their minds and had to pass the "Little-go" examination in these at the end of their second year. Again, I did not have to do this on account of doing two degrees at once. Once one of the lecturers apologised that my Science Maths mark had to be reduced to 100% as otherwise the marks of the other students would look too bad!

Chemistry

The chemistry course started with organic, under Prof Cocker. He was a much more interesting lecturer than most of the other professors that I had to listen to and his department had a number of research programmes going. Later we had rather boring courses on inorganic and physical chemistry. Again we had practicals to complete though I used to slip out sometimes with a few others to Johnson Mooney and O'Briens' coffee shop nearby in Clare St (delicious éclairs for only 4½d!). One of our lecturers mentioned Bohr's early model of the hydrogen atom and gave the reference (*Phil Mag* **26**, 1, 1913). I dutifully ordered that volume in the College Library and it was so dusty that I am sure nobody else had looked at it since it was published!

Physics

I kept until recenly my first-year physics notes, which I diligently wrote up in a bound notebook. The general standard was not much different from the Cambridge GCE A level course that I was already familiar with. Many students who had been to British Public Schools found the first (Junior Freshman) year very easy and so they relaxed, only to find in the Senior Freshman year that they would have to do serious work to keep up.

The physics lectures took place in an old-fashioned theatre with a giant induction coil mounted up on the wall and an ancient "magic lantern" slide projector with all sorts of equally ancient accessories, working with an arc lamp. The Physics Buiding was provided with a central DC power system at various voltages and the ancient projector made use of this.

The physics course had previously been called "Experimental Physics", which was in fact a better description. Theoretical Physics was considered to be a part of the Mathematics degree and as a result, the Physics course proper was emasculated and very weak on the theoretical side. It was also very old-fashioned, more appropriate to the 1930s, and contained a lot of descriptive material. One course was facetiously known as "1000 ways of measuring *e/m*".

The first term was CFG Delaney on "The general properties of matter". He had a strong Dublin accent and I still remember how he pronounced "Murcri" (Mercury). In the second term we had RB Elliott on Electricity and in the third was AH Gregg on light. We had practicals in which we carried out many simple measurements, using apparatus that would have been typical in the late 19th century. One experiment was to find the specific heat of a gas at constant volume, using the original steam calorimeter apparatus built many years before by Joly, a professor at Trinity in the 19th Century. These practicals had to be written up within about a week and this was about the only measurable work that we did during termtime. All depended on the exams after the end of the academic year, just before the next one began in October. So one started the real work during the long Summer vacation and spent August and September in studying seriously.

The better students could get "jobs" as demonstrators to the more junior students such as the pre-meds and engineers, working in the labs once or twice each week. This brought in £5 a term! (not to be sneezed at in those days). There was a very high drop-out rate among the pre-meds and 1st year medical students, many of whom were very poorly prepared in the sciences.

I took part in student societies such as the "Dublin University Experimental Science Association", or DUESA for short, now defunct, which was the science students' society, with a weekly lecture during term. In my second year I essentially ran this, as "Hon Correspondence Secretary", organizing the weekly lectures. It was a general science society, not purely physics and chemistry. We tried to find practising scientists to talk to us. There were no official seminars or colloquia, except occasionally the Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies would offer one by some foreign visitor. I also took part in the Mathematical Society, of which I was librarian in my second year. I remember President De Valera coming quite informally to one of our events when a famous foreign mathematician (Murnaghan?) came over.

I had some degree of contact with CBA McCusker of the Cosmic Ray group of the Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies (DIAS) at 5, Merrion Square. He had been a neighbour of ours in Malahide ten years or so before and I met him again during the visit of the British Association for the Advancement of Science visit to Dublin

in 1957, just as I entered the University. He operated an Extensive Air Shower Array using Geiger counters and cloud chambers. Very soon after its launch, we spotted Sputnik I passing overhead – this was the beginning of the Space Age. Later on I came to know RHW Johnston and C O'Ceallaigh, both of whom worked on nuclear emulsions at DIAS. These were about the only research physicists that I knew in my undergraduate days, though I occasionally had chats with the Hungarian mathematician Cornelius Lanczos, of the theoretical group in DIAS, who had worked for a while with Einstein. I attended a few nice parties with the somewhat bohemian Institute people, including one on Ireland's Eye (island). With Roy Johnston, I did some work on a kind of primitive digital computer using "Dekatrons" for decimal arithmetic connected with scanning particle tracks in nuclear emulsions. Roy was a communist, almost a stalinist. I was quite surprised to meet him several years later at MIT, where he was attending a conference. I asked how he had got into the US and he explained that he had stated his occupation as "Businessman" and had not been questioned about his politics. JL Synge was a well-known relativist who spent his latter years at the Institute and could always be counted on to give a lecture to our Society.

There was some research in Čerenkov radiation from air showers going on at University College Dublin and in spite of the fact that we had very little contact between departments I did manage to visit their installation in the mountains, probably with DIAS friends.

Schrödinger had left Dublin while I was still at school so I never had the opportunity of hearing him lecture. Just as I started at TCD, the British Association had its annual meeting in Dublin and I attended many of its sessions. PMS Blackett was the President and I met him briefly with McCusker.

Whenever possible we visited scientific establishments, such as Dunsink Observatory and Rathmines Castle , where the Jesuits had an unusual form of seismograph. On one occasion I went with Alex Thompson and Dennis O'Sullivan, students at the Institute, to see a large ICL computer at Queen's University Belfast, there being nothing similar in Dublin! I think the first computers at TCD were IBM 1620s that arrived towards the end of my time there. We visited Dunsink Observatory which at that time was between directors and not doing much research. Ellison, a contemporary of my father at the Royal School, Armagh, who had been involved in solar research, had just died. At that time I had not yet developed much interest in astrophysics, except for some radio astronomy.

Foundation Scholarship

In my second year I competed successfully in the Foundation Scholarship examination, held around the Spring. About 20 of these scholarships were awarded each year, about 3 or 4 of them in Natural Sciences. They could be competed for in any year but the second and third years were the most common. I chose Natural Sciences as my subject but unfortunately this led to a neglect of maths that ultimately forced me to give up that course.

This year included lectures from ETS Walton, who had won the Nobel Prize with JD Cockcroft for the first nuclear reactions using an accelerator. We were quite in awe of him. He have the lectures in basic Quantum Mechanics. These were solid and logical and given in a rather phlegmatic style. In chemistry, I enjoyed the lectures in organic, presented by Brian McMurry.

The announcement of the Scholarship winners in the Front Square, in front of the "Public Theatre" or Exam Hall, was a big occasion every Trinity Monday and I was very happy when my name was called out. There was a reception foe the new scholars in the Provost's grand 18th C mansion and in the evening a big formal dinner with many courses and wines to match. To this dinner were invited Scholars from the previous decades – I think there were some from the 19th C present at mine. I have been asked back each decadal anniversary and have managed to attend several of them. The last one I attended was in 2019 (60th anniversary) and I think about half the scholars of my year managed to attend, some like me from distant countries. There were I think two who were celebrating their 70th anniversary who I actually remembered from way back! Before dinner the Scholars of the decades lined up to have a group photo taken and that would appear the next day in the "Irish Times" with our names, our high schools and the names of new Fellows.

Right: Scholars' dinner, 2019

Being a Scholar entitled one to free rooms in College, free commons meals in the Dining Hall and a salary of £150 per year. The tuition fees were about £90 per year for a scientist but I succeeded in getting my father to continue paying these for me. He was as pleased as I was that I had achieved this honour, as had one of my cousins a few years before. I felt he could easily afford it.

Some Scholars collected £5 per term for saying the lengthy Latin grace at the commons meals. Others could collect a similar fee as "markers" who checked that the Divinity students attended chapel on a regular basis.

In the 3rd year (Junior Sophister) I lived in College. I then studied Physics and Mathematics (for scientists). In the 4th year (Senior Sophister) I took physics alone. Among the practical experiments was Millikan's Oil Drop Experiment for finding *e*, the charge on the electron. We also determined *e/m* for the electron and studied the properties of a photomultiplier.

We had an elderly professor (of geophysics) called "Jackie" Poole, from an old Irish academic family. He gave a course on electromagnetism. I remember him looking for a diffusion pump in a cubbyhole under the lecture theatre and muttering "I know I saw it there in 1933". This was about 1960 and we thought that was very funny. Now, of course, I don't quite see such things in quite the same way!

Student life

For most of us, student life was a welcome break from home and many undergraduates, especially those from English public schools, went quite wild. There were a good many private cocktail parties to attend, often called "At Homes". Once or twice a term there were "Commencements" or graduation ceremonies and these were often accompanied by balls held in various city hotels [In later years the whole college would be transformed into a huge party venue for Trinity week].

I moved as soon as I could from home into 17 TCD in "Botany Bay" where I shared rooms on the first floor with my old school friend Peter Skelton, who had obtained a scholarship in History. The apartment consisted of a living room, a bedroom each, a pantry and a kind of scullery. It was cold but a feeble heat was provided by a small gas fire. The default furniture was very sparse and we had to provide our own curtains and easy chairs. I brought an old lounge set from home as well as an old hi-fi. We could rent pictures from one of the college societies, presided over by George Dawson. One of those I chose was the "Rokeby Venus", somewhat to the disgust of my prudish room mate. The rooms were ours for the remainder of our student careers, whether or not they were used, in or out of term time. Baths were taken in a large communal bathhouse with very large tubs, kept immaculately clean. The toilets, one to the 16 students of each house, were rather primitive. The rooms were supposedly cleaned, the beds were made and one's dishes were washed by a "Skip", one of several men who served quite a few rooms each. Ours was a Mr Kirwan. He solemnly warned us not to entertain girls overnight! Once I came back after being away over a month to find dirty dishes still on the table. "Oh, I didn't expect you back until tomorrow" was the Skip's excuse.

Coincidentally, my sister's boyfriend, Jeff Stevenson, had rooms opposite ours on the same floor of number 17. She would often drop in on me to eat her lunch if Jeff was not there for some reason. Jeff was in the same year as me, working towards a B Comm, and they got married soon after he graduated.

In those days students wore jackets and ties. One had to wear gowns to the commons meals [Arts students even had to wear them to lectures]. There were two sittings and they began and ended with long Latin graces (Occuli omnium in te sperant Domine …. and Tibi laus, tibi honor, tibi gloria O beate et gloriosa Trinitas …) There were three courses and we got free ale with them – later Guinness, after the ale brewery closed down, supplied in large pitchers. At the end of the meal, the staff present filed out, in strict order of academic precedence. I remember seeing a newly appointed Vice-Provost (Broderick) gently putting in his place the oldest Senior Fellow (AA Luce) as they left the the high table!

There was a curfew for most students at 10 pm but scholars could come in later. One was not allowed to appear in the Front Square in pyjamas after 10 am and females were not allowed to visit student rooms (exclusively male) before 10 am. Scholars had also the privilege of playing marbles on the Chapel steps (a relic of

the time when this was a gambling game) and could shoot snipe in the College Park (which hundreds of years before was a wetland)!

I had good friends in several faculties. In Maths there was John Miller and Cecil Graham as mentioned. In history there was my roommate Peter Skelton and also Robert Hunter. In science there was TP Shah. One tended to know the other Scholars, even those in other fields. Several of the students of that generation became well-known poets and writers later on, eg Derek Mahon and Michael Longley. In economics I knew Latif Lakhani from Kenya, who now lives in Vancouver and still stays in touch.

The College official responsible for discipline was the Junior Dean, RB McDowell, an eccentric historian who was frequently imitated. The head of the College at the time was a remote figure, AJ McConnell, a mathematician. Later, in Cambridge MA I had a botanical ex-TCD roommate (Keith Ferguson) and he was friendly with a later Provost, Bill Watts, who stayed with us on one occasion while visiting Harvard, sleeping on our couch!

I joined the "Hist" and "Phil", debating societies that offered sitting/reading rooms with the weekly magazines and newspapers. I was too shy to take part in debates though I sometimes attended them. Foreign politicians, often from England, were invited to speak at these. P-H Spaak, President of the European Parliament was one of them (this was before Ireland became a member of the EU). One of my former schoolmates, Neville Keery, was an excellent orator and won the "Observer Mace", open to the whole British Isles. An occasional expedition was to the Lit and Hist Society at UCD, then in its old campus in Earlsfort Terrace, which were very raucous affairs where a debater had to be very good to survive.

There was also a fairly new coffee shop at TCD. Many students would go out in the evenings to pubs and drink rather too much Guinness. I only sometimes went along. There was a "Bona Fide" behind Amiens St Station (now Connolly) that allowed one to drink until very late [Bona Fides were pubs that were open beyond normal hours to travellers who were supposed to be more than 7 miles from home].

Trinity ran a Summer School for foreign students for a couple of weeks each year and I volunteered to help with that one summer. It was a way to meet Swedish girls etc …

Eamon De Valera held his last political rally on College Green in 1959 and this was a raucous affair, coming close to a riot. The gates of the College were completely closed to prevent demonstrators from breaking in.

I often went to plays and operas in the Dublin theatres and sometimes to concerts of the Radio Eireann Symphony Orchestra in the Phoenix Hall. The latter were free if one wrote for tickets in advance. The audiences were very small – nothing like the size they are nowadays. In my last year there was a memorable Beethoven festival at which all the symphonies and piano concertos

were played, with several well-known soloists. This took place in the Olympia Theatre. We often went to theatres, particularly the Olympia, the Gate and the Gaiety. Once I witnessed Brendan Behan and Lord Longford (the owner) chatting, or rather declaiming, at the bar of the Gate, on the use of the word "tart" to refer to a woman by Dubliners. There were memorable performances of Wilde plays, with Michael MacLiammoir, Milo O'Shea and other well-known actors.

Late-night venues were few and far between. One, called the "Paradiso", in D'Olier St, stayed open until 3 am and was a favourite spot for a late-night coffee or dessert. On one occasion, a fellow physics student, Galway Johnson, was there with a girl when the film actor Robert Mitchum walked in. The girl asked Mitchum for an autograph but he, drunk, told her to f-off. Whereupon Galway, not normally an aggressive person, punched him and, to his horror, knocked him out! Quick retreat! This episode made the press!

In Trinity sometimes there were concerts and there was a small theatre that put on revues, along the lines of the famous "Beyond the Fringe" in London. I helped backstage on one production.

There were occasional "hacks" as MIT students would call them. In the Examination Hall where the Commencement (graduation) ceremonies were held, was an ancient organ that had not worked for years. Some students hid loudspeakers inside it and hooked up a gramophone. The organ suddenly started to play and held up the Commencements for a half-hour while various officials sought ways to shut it down. On another occasion some students lowered a thin wire through the very high ceiling of the Dining Hall and used it to pull up a large sign with glue on the back of it, removing the wire afterwards. The sign read "Per ardua ad astra" (through adversity to the stars). The College authorities wondered how it had been done. It took a significant effort to remove it.

The main academic bookshop in Dublin was Hodges Figgis, then on the opposite side of Dawson St to where it is now, and I spent a lot of time there, in Greens in Clare St and Webbs on the quays [Greens was later used as a location in the atmospheric film "The Girl with Green Eyes" that I saw in Boston]. It was also a place where eighteenth-century leather-bound editions could still be picked up quite cheaply.

Having a small income meant that I could do some travelling. I had rarely been outside Ireland except for scout camps. Around my third year some of the DUESA members organized an interesting tour of industrial establishments in England. These included the Pilkington works where the "float" process for making plate glass had been invented and a soap factory of Lever Brothers where carton printing took up more space than soap manufacture!

The physics graduating class of 1961 on the steps of the department. Standing: l-r G Johnson, J. Miller. back: P Rowe, I Dixon, J. McKee, R McMullen. Front: J French. G Wheeler, TP Shah, M Duncan, Marion Walton (Woods), IS Glass.

Other trips I made included one to Rotterdam, via a student flight, and on to Lausanne, where an Indian acquaintance had a girlfriend and rented an apartment that we all stayed in. On this trip I arranged through Institute friends to spend a day at CERN, near Geneva, to see the 25 GeV accelerator. I also made a couple of trips to Paris where one could then find some incredibly cheap hotels, even quite centrally. At one, Hotel d'Aguesseau, on Rue Boissy d'Anglas, next to Place de la Concorde, where we paid a few shillings each, I bumped into the daughter of one of the TCD professors, Adrienne Jessop. She was somewhat mortified to be seen there but it seems it was a well-known place among Irish students! There were probably more cats living there than guests.

After my third year I stayed a month with my cousin Donald Jenkinson in his bedsitter in London. He was then finishing a PhD in Biophysics at University College London. I visited many of the famous museums and enjoyed the sights, the second-hand bookshops and the theatres. One could queue for the "Gods" at Covent Garden and Saddler's Wells, paying about 3 shillings for tickets!

My parents were with me at my graduation ceremony in 1962, a year after I had finished my TCD studies.

In my final year I had an ex-TCD friend Alan Solomon who was studying theoretical physics in Paris because his supervisor had just moved there from Cambridge. He lived in a garret on Rue Voltaire. I stayed in a hotel nearby and usually joined him for breakfast. He occasionally smuggled me into a Jewish student restaurant where one got highly subsidized meals. I went out a couple of times with a Dublin girl who was staying in the Rue des Bons Enfants, of all names! I went to a performance of Fidelio at the old Opéra (now the Opéra Garnier), sitting in the "Gods".

In my final year large numbers of UK companies sent representatives to recruit potential graduates and I went to several interviews, visiting firms in the UK. It was at the time of the famous books such as "The Organisation Man" and it was amusing to see how the companies were using the recruiting methods described. I had no real intention of going into employment and had by then submitted several applications for US graduate schools. John Miller and Cecil Graham (Maths) and Eric Winter (Economics) did the same. At that time, British politics were singularly depressing and the US seemed a better choice than Cambridge or Oxford where Trinity students who wanted to go on for PhDs usually headed for. The American universities asked for "Official Transcripts" which the Assistant Registrar of Trinity provided with reluctance, such things being unknown to him before. I rather think that having a recommendation from a Nobel prizewinner (Prof Walton) might have helped!

I studied hard for my final exams and came first in Natural Sciences, winning the Hackett Prize. Of course, the results were not available until several weeks later, since, as usual, the exams were held in early October, after the long vacation, which was very inconvenient for people going on to graduate school. I left for Boston the day after my last examinations and only received my results much later.

The actual conferring of my degree took place during the Summer of the following year when I was back in Ireland. Trinity very kindly extended my scholarship salary for two years after I had left and this was very helpful to me as an impecunious grad student at MIT.

My son David obtained an MSc degree in Computer Science from Trinity in 2009.