

Raised in Society

By Michael Mullooly

From campus giants to newer groups still establishing their name, society life in Trinity has never been so varied and appealing, writes Michael Mullooly.

Trinity College boasts some of the most influential and popular student societies in Ireland. For many, these societies shape their college experience. There is nothing quite like the passion of a group of people working together in their spare time to promote something they all truly love. Below is a glimpse into just five of the College's societies, of which there are over a hundred, providing a flavour of the vibrancy and variety of Trinity's societies.

Literary Society

Nestled right at the top of House 6 in their iconic room The Attic, LitSoc continues to thrive in Trinity. Despite their calm, bookish exterior, the society was a bustling hive of activity in the 2017-18 year. Under the leadership of Deirbhile Brennan, the society hosted the most events any society ever had in one year, providing lovers of literature and aspiring writers with workshops, a host of guest speakers, the society's trademark week-long LitFest, as well as plenty more events.

The society also hosted perhaps the most opulent ball of the year: their Jane Austen Ball, which rivalled the Trinity Ball in its splendour. The event gave the society's members a chance to bring the literary world to life in style, a highlight in a year studded with iconic events and numerous awards.



Ronan Doherty, Gillian Kiely and Claire Bradley

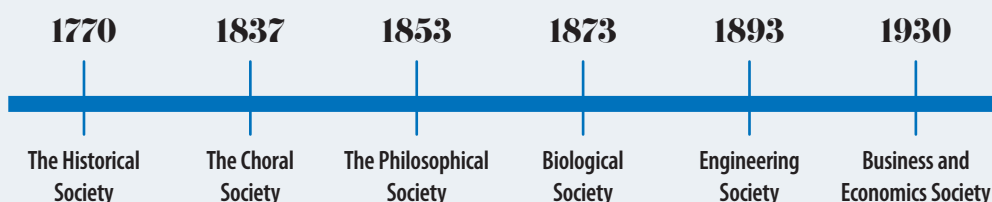


Space Society

Exploding onto the societal scene like one of their trademark model rockets, the fledgling Space Society has seen a meteoric rise in popularity this year, winning Best Small Society at the Society Awards. Speaking with the President, Maggie Coulter, it's clear that a lot of the early success the Space Society saw came from their willingness to collaborate with other societies: "We've always been a very out-there society that's enjoyed getting involved with other societies ... we had a collaborative event between the Russian Society and the American Football Club, we wanted to do a Space Race. I don't think there's ever been a collaborative event between the Russian Society and the American Football Club before." As well as launching rockets from the cricket pitch, the society is striving to act as a bridge for students who want to work in the space industry. The society's flagship event, their yearly careers fair, cements Space Soc as a society which, despite its interest in the infinite, is all about forging close, down-to-earth connections. "I'd like to see the Space Society as the point of contact between students – not necessarily even just in Trinity, but students in Ireland – and the Space industry."

250 YEARS OF SOCIETY LIFE

Today 120 Trinity societies attract dynamic student members from across Trinity covering a diverse range of disciplines. Here is a timeline of a few of the many societies that have been established throughout the centuries:



Trinity VDP

From the Space Society, one of Trinity's smallest societies to one of the biggest, Trinity's Vincent De Paul Society has taken the campus by storm in recent years. However, despite the differences in size and area of interest, the two societies share at their core the same desire: to connect and collaborate.

Speaking with the incoming President, Jack Natin, it is clear that for many involved in VDP, the society is more akin to a family – albeit an “unbelievably enormous” one. With their heavy involvement in schools and communities outside the college campus, VDP works tirelessly to make a positive impact in Dublin and the rest of the country. Believing in the power of the butterfly effect, the society and its members are making a positive change, one small act of kindness at a time.

The highlight of the year for the new President was the implementation of a second night of the Trinity Club, the society's weekly club for intellectually disabled adults, a weekly event that perfectly encapsulates everything the society stands for.



VDP student members enjoy a social occasion

The Phil

One of the most enduring and popular societies on the campus for over three centuries, The Philosophical Society, or The Phil, remains as relevant as ever in Trinity life. In these politically turbulent times, the necessity for constant debate and sharply honed rhetoric is needed as much now as it has ever been.

The Phil has never shied away from shining a light on controversial topics, and this year was no different, as the house met to eloquently butt horns on such topics as modern feminism, the death of the American dream, conservatism and its negative effect on the LGBT movement, and the feared advent of nuclear war.

The Phil also proved that their design skills were as refined as their rhetoric, winning Best Poster for their event, Club Philth.



Her Royal Highness the Duchess of Sussex, Meghan Markle, visited The Phil back in 2013 and was awarded the Bram Stoker Medal by the society.



Meditation Society

“Meditation can be the beginning of one of life's greatest adventures”, or at least that's what the Meditation Society believes, a younger society rapidly growing in popularity amongst a student body who are fully embracing mindfulness and the importance of quieter moments in the increasingly loud 21st century.

The society took home the “Most improved” award in 2018, with the numbers of students showing up for their events reflecting that improvement. The society's outdoor meditation sessions at the beginning of the year helped prepare new and returning students alike for the rigours of the academic term, providing everyone with the techniques and mantras necessary to find their own inner peace. The society also advocated for honest, open dialogue between members after meditation sessions, and this twin approach to mental wellbeing has proven popular, effective and more necessary than ever.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Michael Mullooly B.A. (2018) was the literature editor for Tn2 Magazine for two years. He estimates that at least two-thirds of his college experience revolved around various societies.

