

## Trinity College Secondhand Booksale 25 Years, 1990-2014

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This year, 2014, the Trinity College Secondhand Book sale celebrates its twenty-fifth year. Founded in 1990 by a group of Trinity College alumni and staff, which included members of the Dublin University Women Graduates Association (DUWGA), the Trinity Association and Trust, TCD Library staff and Friends of the Trinity Library, the Sale has become a major event in the College calendar and is supported by staff and students across the community. Many members of the first Booksale Committee are still involved in the collection, sorting and pricing of the books and in the management of the sale itself. It was emphasized from the outset that all the books on sale were donated and were not old stock from the TCD Library.

The Booksale began as a small experimental event held in the Examination Hall in April 1990. The idea originated with Daphne Wormell of the DUWGA and the TCD Association, whose husband had served for many years as chairman of the Library Committee. During their time in the University of Princeton, USA, Daphne had experienced such a sale, and on her suggestion an inclusive College committee was set up under the auspices of the Trinity Trust to organize an annual book sale. Members of the first committee included Eda Sagarra (professor of German, chairman), Norah Kelso of Trinity College Association and Trust (secretary), Gertie Goodhue (co-ordinator of the Sale and Trinity Trust), David Norris (Friends of the Library), Daphne Wormell, Ann Budd, Joyce Craig and Grace McBratney of the DUWGA, Charles Benson (Library Department of Early Printed Books), Richard Haworth

(Freeman Geography Library), Dr Ken Milne (Trinity Trust) and Dr Fred Falkiner (Trinity Trust).

In 1990 donations of about 5000 books were collected from graduates and friends and were stored in the TCD Association office in East Theatre. Here they were priced and boxed before being transferred to the Examination Hall for the sale. It was decided to hold a wine reception for graduates and donors on the Friday evening and an auction of the most valuable books took place on the Saturday morning. A total of £9,400 was reached which 'exceeded everybody's expectations'. The money was to be distributed by the Trinity Trust in grants to promote research and to supplement departmental library grants, now seriously diminished by reductions in the state grant to Irish universities.

Much encouraged by the success of the first sale, the Committee decided to organize a second sale for the following year in 1991. It began to recruit and involve more helpers. The over-riding problem in the first decade of the Book Sale's history was space to store donations. Paul Ferguson of the TCD Map Library took charge of posters and publicity, and the very success of the initiative exacerbated the problem as donations started to come in in large and small numbers throughout the year. Brian McMurry and Lyal Collen of the Trinity Trust gave much support in seeking to find a suitable place for a bookstore. The Committee were grateful to Professor John Byrne, who offered storage space in the Computer Science Department in 192, Pearse Street. Energetic and enthusiastic new book sorters and packers were recruited. They included Gerry Watts, whose husband was Provost, Clarissa Pilkington (DUWGA), Lydia Shackleton (Library), David Berman (Philosophy) and David Abrahamson of the Trust. David Berman and Neville Figgis assisted Richard Haworth with the auction, run by the auctioneer, John De Vere White. It was held on the first evening of the sale and raised £3,500. The



*Michael Abrahamson and Charles Benson at the tills.*



*The 'Ireland' tables always attract most attention.*

1991 sale realised over £10,000 and grants from the Trinity Trust were distributed to ten Departments in College, namely Botany, Classics, Computer Science, English, German, Geography, Italian, Mathematics, Physics and Zoology, as well as to the Old Library, the Map Library, the Science Library, and the Weingreen Museum. Ellen Hanley of the Trinity Trust Office became a member of the committee and henceforth the Trust handled the finances of the Sale and the payment of the grants.

However, in 1992, the year of the College Quatercentenary, the storage crisis became acute and threatened the very future of the Sale. The demands of the year-long celebrations of Trinity's first four hundred years meant that space, most notably the Examination Hall as the Sale's venue, would not be available. In the event the College agreed to permit the use of the Atrium beside the Dining Hall for the sale in April. It was a difficult occasion as the Atrium proved to be anything but a fitting location – the narrow staircases were too cramped for transporting books and there was little space for the storing, pricing and boxing of the books, which now had increased to some 500 large (and heavy) boxes.

The third sale in 1993 was back in the Exam Hall and was even more successful and the gross takings were £10,624. The Librarian gave permission for the catacombs basement area of the 1937 Reading Room to be used for the storage and preparation of the books. This venue was very spacious and although access to the rooms was a problem at times and donations of books often had to be left at the Lincoln Place Gate or in the Berkeley Library. A new telephone was installed to allow the book packers to keep in contact with Security Staff in case they got locked in.



*Ellen Hanley and Gertie Goodhue browsing.*



*'Half-price' Saturday.*

Frances Haworth, young daughter of Richard Haworth, came as a helper to the Reading Room and was very impressed by the catacombs:

We arrived in Trinity, took one last look at the blue sky, the green leaves and the lush buds on the trees and all the glory of spring and ducked through the doorway to the dim glow of the Catacombs. The Catacombs are a series of rooms under the ground. The largest room is the sorting room. It is dim and long with bookshelves in neat columns down the room, across the room, around the room and anywhere else you can think of. There are just two little alcoves in the walls (rather like windows but with no light coming through) on which a mug of coffee or a half eaten biscuit usually lurks...'

Later on at the Sale, Frances was allowed to 'wo-'man one of the cash tills. Not only did she thoroughly enjoy the 'buzz' of the Exam Hall but proved an expert at handling the till:

For the next few hours I worked the till while freezing to death as I was standing right beside the door. Ann (Budd) was collecting admission and changing our £5 and £10 notes.

At the stroke of 7.30 pm there was some hammering and then the auction began. I was working the till throughout the auction; if I hadn't been doing that I would have stopped Dad buying the 5 boxes that he did purchase...

The Booksale auction became an important College social event, now held on the Thursday evening. Donors of books and other alumni were invited and wine was served in the Hall organized by Dick and Elizabeth Tottenham and



*Bill and Mary Magowan with Ian McAulay dispensing the wine.*

Bill and Mary Magowan of the Trinity Trust. The auction was managed by David Britton representing Taylor de Vere's Art Auctions and raised in 1993 the sum of £2867. Other new helpers included Mary Carson (Chemistry), Maureen MacAlister and Eve McAulay, who all later joined the Committee and became very active members. DUWGA helpers included Lesley Greer—intrepidly active as both seller and holder of books in her nineties—together with Marion Barrett, Phyllis Grehan, Margaret Howard, Elizabeth Jones, Anne O'Connor and Kate Ryder. Aine Keegan and Heather Rice assisted with the auction. Andrew Bonar Law later presided as auctioneer. The involvement of family members of the Committee became a feature of the sale through the years. In 1993 Katy Goodhue and Frances Haworth both came to help as did later members of Ann Budd's and Charlotte Bonar Law's families. Thanks to Ann's contacts within College, she was always able to recruit graduate students, members of the Hist. and

strong sportsmen/women to assist with carrying the boxes.

The key issue therefore for the Committee was to find a permanent bookstore for the Booksale where boxes could be sorted and priced throughout the year as the contributions came in. This problem proved very difficult to solve because of the great pressure on rooms in College. It was argued that as the Sale had already made just under £30,000 for College, it warranted a space on the campus. Richard Haworth was particularly active in searching for a suitable area, writing letters and making a strong case to the Bursar, but of no avail. The Committee had to wait another five years before an acceptable solution was found. Until that time both the Committee and the books led a nomadic existence, wondering each successive year if this was not be the last of the sales. Meanwhile the growing network of Trinity graduates, their families and friends across Ireland and even extending to the UK, who not only were giving so generously of their time and effort, but were renewing their contact with Trinity, began to wonder if their commitment was valued by their College.

For the time being the bookstore was back in the Computer Laboratory in 1994 moving for 1995 and 1996 to [?] the Engineering Tunnel. Finally, in 1997, the Committee was allocated a permanent office and storage room in the arches on the ground floor of the new Goldsmith Hall, under the platform of Pearse Street railway station. This decision owed much to the influence and support of Provost Tom Mitchell, who recognised the importance to College of the goodwill to the alumni and their involvement in the Sale. Though the rooms in the arches were cramped and the sorting rooms were windowless, this designated area proved to be a most useful asset to the Committee as now the incoming books could be left in to the Goldsmith Hall throughout the year and could be

<b><i>Sale Year</i></b>	<b><i>Net income €</i></b>	<b><i>Grants Allocated €</i></b>
1990	10,212	9,228
1991	12,465	11,110
1992	8,069	9,523
1993	11,720	11,872
1994	11,428	11,311
1995	17,448	17,776
1996	15,788	N/A
1997	16,865	15,237
1998	21,979	18,410
1999	18,090	22,209
2000	18,603	16,481
2001	25,417	14,744
2002	26,248	17,194
2003	20,540	21,659
2004	19,510	25,335
2005	23,464	19,556
2006	27,105	26,857
2007	27,441	26,142
2008	26,575	22,261
2009	20,864	30,813
2010	20,276	22,351
2011	15,912	24,520
2012	24,433	1,400
2013	19,534	38,649
<b>Total</b>	<b>459,985</b>	<b>434,639</b>

*Booksale income and grants 1990-2013*

sorted, priced and packed into small boxes for easy handling. As a result of the representations made to Provost Mitchell by the Committee, the key decision was taken in 1997 to include the date of the annual Sale in the College Calendar. From that time onwards, the College Booksale's future was assured.

Since 1997, the Sale has settled down, establishing various strict routines. The management has become tight-

ly organised with members of the Committee and the other helpers each undertaking their assigned task. Book sorters and pricers work in the cluttered bookroom under the watchful eye of Mary Carson without whom the Booksale would not operate. Richard Haworth selects and assembles the best books for the auction catalogue. Ron Cox is in charge of the layout of the subject tables in Exam Hall. Fred and Helen Andrews and Susan Parkes organize and oversee the display of the auction books in the Exam Hall. Gertie Goodhue presides over the auction on the opening night in the Hall. Ellen Hanley deals with all matters of money - the cash flow, the tills, the sale takings and the payment of grants. Paul Ferguson handles the publicity notices for circulation and Helen-Conrad Ó Briain organizes the Student Booksale each October and enlists the help of stalwart graduate students to carry boxes of books. The Buildings Office and the Security staff give ready support and the transportation of hundreds of boxes to the Exam Hall is carried out most efficiently. Michael Abrahamson, Eda Sagarra and Charlotte's young daughter Phoebe compete at the tills to see who is the quickest at adding the multifariously-priced books purchased. For many years Gertie Goodhue has kept a record of the donors. Thanks to her meticulous record and as part of our work promoting the sense of community in College, it has been possible for the chairman every year to thank each donor and each relevant member of the Buildings Office and security staff individually by personal letter.

In 2012, thanks to the generosity of alumni and other donors, the number of packed boxes increased to over 700. The auction books used to be displayed separately on the previous day to allow serious bidders to view the items; this practice was ended in 2012 as the auction lists now are posted on the Internet. Subject specialists are asked to come and assist with pricing books in their own area. On the day of the sale, Bill Vaughan (History) has traditionally provided 'the workers'

with a delicious welcome lunch in his rooms in College and a garden party lunch for the Committee was held for many years in Eda Sagarra's home.



*Eda Sagarra, Daphne Wormell and Ken Milne  
at the checkout.*