

Towards 1985

There can be no doubt that the team of '64 led by Tony Shillington meant business. Their first setback, however, came early in the year and they never truly recovered. The fatal blow was the news that the Curragh indoor stadium which had served the club well for many years was to undergo 'a drastic conversion for horses'. The events were cancelled but were later given a reprieve, which gave Trinity the chance to show its hostility towards the decision to give preference to horses over man, by fielding two teams. The committee chose the first team and the second squad should consist of as many people in the club as they could think of.

Both matches against the Curragh were closely contested affairs, the first being lost by a single point and the second by six points though in the latter, the club did have the satisfaction of relegating a U.C.D. selection to third place. In one way, this was a historic year; on April 14th, trials were held in College Park.

As we have seen before, it was the first time that the ladies competed in public and there were some very encouraging results. The Trinity decathlon and Pentathlon, sadly, an event which has disappeared in more recent times, was held later that week. Mr. L. N. Horan, a vice-president, presented his cup to D. Clarke and Lil Ganly was presented with the pentathlon cup by her mother, Mrs. Ganly.

As the season got into full swing, victories were recorded against Avondale and Clonliffe with two Trinity teams finishing first and second. In the Inter-Club relays a victory was fashioned by our field eventers and hurdlers. Not a single track event was won while in all the hurdles and field events, we took the top honours. Birmingham and Aberdeen also fell foul of our talents, the team being ably led to victory by Shillington who ran the classic captain's race in both the 440 yards hurdles and his more favoured event, the 880 yards. The highlight of the year or what should have been, turned out to be a flop, for the Trinity team at any rate. The Irish University Championships were a thoroughly depressing occasion. The committee at its next sitting were to complain bitterly about the state of the track which they described as a Gaelic football pitch roughly and hurriedly marked for the occasion. The state of the pitch sadly though could not stop U.C.D. from powering their way to their third successive title. The revered J. P. O'Sullivan Trophy was once again on its merry way to Belfield. A strong

wind, and needless to say, a heavy track, were all against top class performances and not a single new record was established. The race of the day however was the 880 yards in which Power of U.C.D. just pipped Shillington in a thrilling finish. Our only wins were Boelens in the long jump, Platt in the shot putt and Scott in the 120 yards hurdles. The 4x100 yards team of Beeches, Rees, Ray and Austin, a lively combination, also captured the sprint relay.

In addition to this, morale was further lowered by defeats against Queens and old rivals Glasgow. The colours match was now the only opportunity for the team to regain lost pride and this it did in style. The might of U.C.D.'s Moriarty (who had just two weeks earlier captured the 100 yards, 220 yards and 440 yards at the University Championships) was tamed by tremendous sprint doubles by Rees and Austin. The match was won by a clear twenty points. The match against Queens, despite defeat, was made memorable by the fact that the Lord Londonderry Trophy was for the first time held on the new Malone track. The secretary of the time wrote "We were all very taken aback by the fabulous rubber track and felt honoured that we were taking part in the first match on such a track in Europe". Things have gone full circle now and today's athletes are taken aback when they are confronted with a grass track in College Park. It has outlived the clay and cinder eras and now will I'm sure survive the tartan challenge. It quite simply is the best running track in these islands, despite the four dreaded bends and the invisible obstacles which make life difficult at best, for the tiring quarter miler. A 100 metres hurdles on a rainy day has however been known to sort out the men from the boys.

The following colours were awarded for the season '64-'65 by the colours committee; S. Austin, J. Rees, A. Ray, D. Clarke, B. O'Neill, K. Warnock, S. Byrne, A. Scott, F. Middleton, J. Russell, I. Jeffries, R. Boelens, I. Pointer, L. Hart, C. Butterworth, H. K. Skipton, R. Miller and finally, A. Shillington.

Despite the initial flurry of activity, the remainder of the sixties followed roughly the same pattern. Most successes that the club did have were due to outstanding individual performances rather than any depth of talent throughout the ranks. This was shown by the failure to lift the Trophy throughout the remainder of the decade. It was seen that the second man to score was all important to the outcome of the Universities Championships. We could always supply a disproportionate share of winners but in many cases, our second scorer finished too far down the field to count.

One year later, the disappointments of the previous season were made to look almost respectable. Every new match brought a tale of woe. The track and field report at the General Meeting showed a solitary victory against St. Columba's College. It was also pointed out, however, that the club had yet to compete in the G. V. Ryan Trophy, the U.A.U. Championships and in a tour to London. The main hope of a team win was in London and only then "if we can persuade our London friends to put out the

weakest team against us". The chances of salvaging anything from the wreck were very slim indeed. The inter-club relays did, however, produce a number of good individual performances including C. Butterworth's throwing in the javelin. He was consistently over the 190 feet mark showing he could easily break over the 200 feet barrier with sufficient competition. Greer ran a very capable 440 and 880 yards but unfortunately, an injury in the Belfast-Dublin walk forced him out of track competition for the remainder of the year. The Belfast-Dublin tie used to be an annual event in May; sadly now it too has gone by the wayside. Guinness, by tradition, used to give a barrel of stout to the winner who in turn, by tradition, used to donate it to a party to which all who had helped or competed were invited. A stout fellow by the name of Ian Angus seemed to be the first person to take the event seriously and completed the course in a time of 26 hours, 25 minutes in 1963. The following year saw Tim Macey reduce the record considerably and he subsequently became a respectable marathon runner. To end talk of what was undoubtedly a gruelling event on a happier note, in 1963 a Miss Lenone Best also competed and walked the course in 39 hours. She was later to become Mr. Angus' wife.

The Queens match in College Park again saw Butterworth increase his best in the javelin with a throw of 196 feet and 7 inches. He continued his magnificent competitive record by winning the shot putt and the discus. A certain Mr. M. Bull of Queens arguably put up the best performance of the day clearing the bar at 14'6" in the vault. The Trinity team was sadly lacking however, through the inevitable and lamentable loss of the rugby players Ray and Boelens and injuries to a few key members.

Saturday May 2nd is written into the minute book as "probably one of the blackest days in the club's history". It was also the date of the Irish University Championships. U.C.D. took 12 points to Trinity's 4 in the 440 yards hurdles and this set the pattern for the remainder of the afternoons sport. Butterworth and Platt won the javelin and shot respectively and these were the only individual wins. The 4x110 yard team: Leamans, Rees, Ray and Boelens scored our only track win.

After another defeat at the hands of Stranmillis College in Belfast, our athletes' confidence was almost shattered. They returned home with their tails between their legs and meekly vowed to spend the winter looking after the welfare of Greer and Millington and trying to lure a few of the lost souls back to the track for the new year. Finally, the colours match was lost to U.C.D. but not without a magnificent double by Platt, the captain, to cap what was not Trinity's best ever season. So apart from the consistency of Platt and Butterworth in the throwing events, there was little to enthuse about, but endure we did and already plans were being hatched in the bowels of Botany Bay to oust the U.C.D. pack and release their stranglehold on our trophy.

Despite the gloom, the general meeting had the pleasant task of ratifying four new records. Alan Scott's 15.2 seconds for the 120 yards hurdles (established at the College

Races on May 26th, 1965) was ratified as was J. R. D. Russell's leap of 6'2" in the high jump in Wurzburg during July '65. After some discussion, it was decided to start a special category of records for metric performances and the first times to be included in this category were Austin's 10.7 seconds for the 100 metres (also in Wurzburg on July 14th, 1965) and A. D. G. Shillington's 55.5 seconds for the 400 metres hurdles in Berne on July 7th. despite some queries as to the validity of the latter performance.

It should not go without mention that following the National Championships in Santry on June 25th, Rees, Snaith, Russell and Thunerke were all selected to represent Ireland against England on Wednesday June 29th. Rees being selected by virtue of his fine win in the 220 yards in 22.6 seconds and a third place in the 100 yards in 9.9 seconds. Russell took the high jump title with a mighty jump of 6'4" while Thunerke threw 211'6" to bring back the javelin title. Snaith was second in the 120 yards high hurdles and clubmate Miller was third. Boelens rounded off a successful championships by finishing in third place in the long jump with 20'11".

Despite the poor year, Trinity still managed to hold four places on an Irish team, a point which again emphasises our real problem, lack of depth and numbers. The club was past a stage where it could easily field two track and field teams and just as easily attract droves of brave and fearless men to the treacherous Phoenix Park for the weekend jaunt.

Chris Butterworth led the team into the new year and some fine early season performances by himself in the javelin and discus emphasised his leadership qualities. On Sunday April 23rd, D.U.H.A.C. became affiliated to Bord Luthchleas na hEireann and the following Wednesday, twelve teams competed in the inter club relays. Our membership of B.L.E. was to raise a slight problem a few weeks later again; team secretary, B. O'Neill, on enquiring about Mike Bull's non-participation in the College Paces found that the B.A.A.B. had asked Bull not to travel to Dublin for the event so as not to strain the existing relations between the N.I.A.A.A. and the newly formed B.L.E. The club funds at the General Meeting had been depleted to £11.3.7.

The strain of worrying about the club's financial position must have had an unnerving effect on athletes as they were beaten in three matches in quick succession; the inter club relays. Queens in College Park and finally, the colossal defeat in the Irish University Championships at the hands of U.C.D. who amassed 135 points to Cork's 104 and D.U.H.A.C.'s 57. The only success of the day was the admirable Butterworth who again took the javelin title. The highlight of the Queen's match was the win in the 880 yards by Gash with a personal best of 1:58.4 with B. O'Neill finishing second and also getting below the two minute mark.

The club at this stage were attempting to have a say in the running of the College Races. The format of the races was to be changed and Tim Macey asked that before this be done, due consideration should be given to the wishes of the athletic club. The same

racers have, in recent times, suffered a relentless decline in popularity. Attendance was down to a paltry few; I suppose a direct reflection of the modern athlete's unwillingness to compete for its own sake. Nowadays, to attract stars, astronomical sums of money are needed. The club has decided that payment to compete in the College Races was out of bounds and so have turned inwards in an effort to attract the attendance and participation of students. This has not been as successful as would have been wished, but the next few years shall hopefully show some kind of a revival. Tim Macey incidentally took the 104th College Races marathon in a time of two hours 43 minutes and 18 seconds. A familiar figure, Noel Carroll took the 880 yards invitation in a time of 1.52.9 beating Wilcox of Great Britain into second place. Tom O'Riordan, another familiar name to today's sports readers, took the two mile invitation with a time of 8 minutes, 55.8 seconds.

The remainder of the season of '68 was disappointing — beaten again in the University Championships and colours march. The match against Queens had to be refixed for Santry due to a prior booking of College Park by the cricket club, despite an attempt to get the cricketers to play their game on the rugby-pitch! The Universities Championships were held in College Park which was a notable event in that we saw a full Queens team competing for the first time in some years. Mowat won the shot and discus double. Gash was the unfortunate victim of a spiking accident in the mile and was third in the 880 yards. Relationships at the end of the year with B.L.E. were described by captain Warnock as 'good'. The College Races the following year were hit by a ban on English athletes competing in Ireland. Hugh Gash wished to invite Queens to compete instead, an idea with which B. Nolan (secretary) did not agree, on the grounds that the races should be more of a spectacle than an athletic event. The match went ahead but only on the understanding that it would be discontinued when the ban on English athletes was lifted. A new constitution was drawn up and the colour of the mens' vests were to be changed to maroon "because white was not distinctive enough". The outstanding new member of the team was Ian Mowat who won the shot, discus and javelin events in his first outing for the team, the annual triangular between D.U.H.A.C., Avondale and Clonliffe. John Dillon made his 1st appearance in a 4x400 metres relay at the inter club relays. He ran 53 seconds for his lap. Later, he ran his first 400 metres hurdles race in College Park at our club championships in a time of 59.9 seconds. Considering there was no-one else in the race, it was a sign of better things to come from the same John. The Universities Championships were held on the Queens Malone track where, unfortunately, the organisation, despite the lovely track, left much to be desired. Complaints were widespread but Queens made the most of the confusion and stole away with the spoils. Dillon was the most outstanding of the Trinity athletes. He was third in the 440 yards hurdles in 56.0 seconds, a new college record, and was also third in the 200 metres as well as being a member of the 4x110 relay team which took second place

behind Queens; Blake-Knox, Underwood and Hurrell made up that quartet. The team was weakened by the absence of captain Martin Snaith and Ian Mowat who would have scored highly in the throws. Our two winners on the day were Hugh Gash in the 880 metres with a time of 1.56.5 and H. Smyth, who tied the vault with Lane of U.C.D. Mowat went on to set a new match record in the colours with a throw in the shot putt of $47'5\frac{1}{4}"$ in which he also won the discus and was third in the high jump.

John Dillon went on to become one of the finest athletes ever seen in Trinity and one of Ireland's best. In the colours, he recorded 55.3 seconds in the 440 yards hurdles and also won the 220 yards. Unfortunately, in the former, there was only one watch recording the time so it could not be ratified as a college record. But the old record was not to last for long. Reports of club matches between this and 1974 consistently praised his brilliant performances. His wins almost became a tradition and he had a rare ability to run anything from 100 yards to 880 yards, including the hurdles up to a very high standard. Arguably his finest performance in a Trinity vest was the colours match of 1971.

Having not won the George Dawson Trophy for a period of seven years, the D.U.H.A.C. team were determined and single minded about the task that lay ahead. Tactics rose to a crescendo with Dillon who by now held the national record in the 440 yards hurdles not competing in his favoured event. Instead, he concentrated on winning all his other events: The 100 yards in 9.9 seconds, the 220 yards in 22.6 seconds, the 440 yards in 49.4 seconds and finally, the 120 yards high hurdles in a time of 15.6 seconds. The same day, John McIntyre made a double in the 880 and one mile events while Rob Walker's win in the three miles and John Key's in the 440 yards hurdles cleaned up all the track events for Trinity. The night was almost over with only the javelin remaining and we needed a win to take the victory. A Nigerian, Emanuel Areo let the spirit of the team and a few words from Mr. West gone to his head and he almost threw the javelin through the window of the Maths Department. Trinity had at last broken the bogey and beaten the old rivals.

Another scintillating run by Dillon this time in his term as club captain in 1973 will long be remembered. D.U.H.A.C. regained the vice-president's cup after a gap of eleven years. His run in the final leg of the 4x800 metres event drew huge applause. He was asked to make up some forty yards going into the final two circuits and so he did in great style to win by over two seconds. That year, he regained the 400 metres and 800 metres titles at the Irish Universities Championships in Belfast. The colours was again taken with Dillon stretching his legs once again to win the 400 and 800 metres events. The state of affairs at D.U.H.A.C. was at this time pleasing to all concerned. Tom O'Riordan wrote in a headline "The influence of coaching and a little better organisation has brought about a greater awareness of athletics in Dublin University. And their second win in three years over U.C.D., in the annual colours



Figure 18: The incomparable John Dillon — holder of a wide range of College, and until recently, Irish records.

match at College Park was a just reward for their efforts". Trinity had four prolific scorers in John Dillon, Dave Tilsley, Michael Kennedy and Jim O'Connor. O'Connor won the shot and discus. Kennedy, 400 metres hurdles and pole vault while Tilsley set a match record in the 110 metres hurdles of 15.5 seconds and took second in the 200 metres.

The new coach, Mr. Cyril White, must take some credit for this revival, if it could be called that. He initiated the all important circuit training as part of the winter schedule and many athletes made much progress under his watchful eye. His dedication and enthusiasm rallied what had previously been a ragged bunch of individuals into a formidable and spirited team. It is interesting to note also that in the Universities Championships, a certain Mr. Brendan Curtain of U.C.D. won the high jump event and finished second in the long jump, shot, putt and javelin. The same fellow twelve years later was to play a vital role in bringing back the P. J. O'Sullivan Trophy to Trinity for only the second time in twenty-five years.

The early 70's brought mixed fortunes to our athletes. Events over which they had no control began to have a bearing on their sport. Politics once again reared its ugly head as Queens wrote to the club to say that they had to cancel all proposed competition with us because of the attitudes of the Irish athletics boards; this followed the suspension of the N.U.U. cross country team and three of the Queens athletes, who appeared in Maynooth for the annual inter-varsity cross country. Another meeting fell victim to the same argument. The team travelled to Derry and arrived only to find that they were not being allowed to have an official meeting. The athletes had to be content to navigate a somewhat overgrown track which was unmarked. The freezing wind blowing down the back straight capped the atmosphere and had it not been for the evenings healthy social activities, the whole trip could have been called a failure. At the General Meeting of 1971, Mr. L. N. Horan having completed his term of office as club president was replaced by Mr. S. H. Polden. Colours were awarded at that same meeting to John McIntyre, Emmanuel Areo, John Dillon, Derek Row, Rob Walker, Mike Ryan, Joyn Keys, Mike Foster, Hugh Newell, Alan Shatter, Chris Pearson and Peter Dee. One of the most unusual pleas of any general meeting came the following year when the chairman asked if it were too much to hope for that the president's name, Mr. R. J. Chillingworth, be spelt correctly on the College Races programme.

Middle and long distance running at that time seemed to be making somewhat of a return to strength in the college and in 1970, the club entered a team in the 15 mile National Championships. John O'Connell and Charles Price managed to come in together in 27th place with Derek Row and Mike Ryan not far behind. Rob Walker did not finish the course however, due to the extreme cold. Walker was two years later to become the Irish Universities Champion at 10,000 metres with a time of 30.11.0 so clipping almost two minutes off the previous record. He also ran a fine race to finish in

second place to the 5000 metres. Trinity incidently were beaten into third place despite Dillon's fine double in the 400 and 800 metres and the captain. David Baird's win in the 400 metres hurdles. An interesting meeting with Queens took place later that year in Malone for the Lord Londonderry Trophy. In the hurdles. David Tilsley was going very well until he hit a hurdle which he later decided "must Have been nailed to the track". He was catapulted into the next lane to be greeted with the news that he was disqualified. As was usual, Queens were easy winners but our team did catch a glimpse of the Londonderry Trophy while gulping tea and buns preparing to catch the Dublin train.

The same, fate was to befall our 400 metres hurdler Mike Kennedy in Belfast 1973. At the universities final. He fell at the final barrier; all credit to him for manfully getting back on his feet and taking second place. Tim O'Connor took the shot and javelin titles the same day while runner-up position in the shot putt went to Philip Orr — yet another rugby playing athlete. The practice of dual involvement in sports in college has constantly frustrated the best efforts of many team secretaries down the years. It is known however that athletics, of all the sports, is probably the one which lends itself best to being taken in partnership with another. It imparts upon the athlete an awareness of his own body and a sense of movement which is vital in all lines of sport. Conversely. it may also be true to say that athletics may be the one most badly affected by playing other games, because of the drastic effects that even small injuries can have upon athletic performance. Increasingly, nowadays. people take the view that concentration on a specific branch of sport is the best course of action but I feel that a healthy interest in a few makes for more enjoyment, appreciation and a healthier attitude to all spheres of life.

That same year a novel idea was tried out to further interest in the College Races into which the colours match was incorporated. It seemed to be an unqualified success — a big crowd, good weather and good athletics. Tradition was also seen to be broken a year later when Queens agreed to hold the Londonderry Trophy meeting in Dublin. Trinity also broke what seemed an almost traditional Queens dominance of the event and won it for the first time in over a decade. Progress, it seems, was being made when the University Championships were held in Belfield on their new all-weather track — fittingly in appalling weather conditions as if to test it's claim to being "all weather". It was, but our team evidently was not. Suffice to say that for the first time in a while, we failed to bring home a gold medal from that event. One Charlie Roberts provided the team with a moment's light relief when he went for an involuntary swim and almost drowned on the second lap of the steeplechase.

In this year also, Ian Travers leaped an excellent $6'5\frac{1}{2}"$ in the colours match to make him the third highest jumper in Irish athletic history. That performance was to earn him the club 'best performance' award at the year's end. The new president of the club



Figure 19: D.U.H.A.C. Team, 1976 — winners of the Trinity Relays, the Colours Match, and the Londonderry Trophy.

was Col. David McNeill who replace Mr. Chillingworth in the chair. New colours were awarded to Kingston Mills and Robin Wormell who equalled the 'pinks' time of 3.57.3 in the universities 1500 metres final to take second place. The club awards went to C. Anderson — 100 metres and long jump; K. Mills — 800 metres; D. Smith — pole vault and D. Tilsley — 110 metres hurdles. The question should be asked: Why did Trinity fail to assert themselves as the top university club during these years and the few following, when it seemed that they should? Gathered together, our athletes were indeed a potent force, but the contention of more than one team secretary was that "The full potency of our forces was never unleashed", again showing our age old difficulty in assembling the full compliment of men to take part in the important competitions. Individual success was widespread, as was the case in the 1960's, but the team success which should logically follow having those individuals, never quite followed. However, despite the apparent lack of success, athletics was now enjoying a resurgence — many people, including the ladies, were taking part and taking great pleasure from the sport. The season of '76 was a very successful one — seven matches contested with five victories including an 18 point 'colours' win, and indeed one of the losses saw the team gain second place in the University Championships a mere six points adrift of Queens. In less productive seasons, the question was often asked at the year's end: "What went wrong?". This year they were quite entitled to ask what went right? Philip Conway was the new club coach and he largely helped to guide the team along the right lines. The most significant. contribution to the varsities team was that given by B. Curtin, four of whose five events were on the field. Altogether, amassed a total of 21 points winning the javelin and placing second in the 110 metres hurdles. Ian Travers again won the high jump and another Irish international, G. Dee, turned on the style in the 800 metres to gain a great win. Kingston Mills and R. Wormell were prevented from taking a 1,2 in the 1500 metres by the good running of Liam O'Brien from N.C.P.E. who subsequently represented Ireland at the Olympic Games. V. O'Brien and C. Anderson kept up the strong sprinting tradition with second and third in the 100 metres while O'Brien was also placed third in the 200 metres. One year later, some performances were also notable — especially that of G. Giblin in winning the 800 metres. John Murphy threw the javelin 50.62 metres to head the field by over a metre. Robin Wormell continued his good form in the 1500 metres by powering his way through the field to win decisively. The field eventers also showed they could hold their own, good performances were achieved by R. Trautman, F. Conway, A. Craig, P. O'Reilly and S. Smith. The strength of Queens again won the day and we finished once more as gallant runners-up.

1978 was a season which promised much but yielded little. The Londonderry Trophy was again lifted and its capacity was sorely put to the test in the pavilion bar. We also had a win over Queens in the blues. The team which travelled to Belfast for the varsity championship was a depleted force, injury and absenteeism robbing us of vital men. S.

Smith played a captain's part by winning the vault (he narrowly missed the record), and gaining personal bests in both the javelin and 110 metres hurdles where he finished fifth and fourth respectively. F. Conway had a good win in the long jump. But while we were picking up points here and there, Queens were landing them in bulk finally amassing a grand total of 143 points with ourselves relegated to third place. The team were down after this defeat but were most certainly not out. Our 4x400 metres squad proved the point by scoring a notable victory in a somewhat "unofficial" race at 12.30am that night. So the trip after all was wound up on a successful note.

We were attempting a week later to win the colours for the third successive year, our prospects for which diminished however when we discovered that Viv O'Brien, a former D.U.H.A.C. stalwart was assisting the opposition. He took the 200m and helped U.C.D. to fashion a deserved victory. Good performances on our side were recorded by P. Dunne in the 1500 metres, N. Young in the 110 metres hurdles, F. McNamara in the 400 metres and Roy Dooney in the 5000 metres. All the field eventers performed well and indeed had it not been for their strength we would not have been within shouting distance of our rivals at the finish. Conway, Smith, Trautnam, Burgess, McGing, Spring and Murphy all performed well.

The College Races of '78 were the highlight of the year. Races secretary, A. Hewson managed to put together a high class field. Included was a match between D.U.H.A.C. a B.L.E. selection and the Army. Our own John Maher won the marathon in a very creditable 2.42.38 on his first attempt at the distance. The 70's ended in much the same vein as that in which the decade began. The 'colours' of '79 was indeed the highlight with Trinity recording a colours double — the men's margin being 89–82, and it all descended with the last event of the day, the 5000 metres; Kingston Mills won a hard competitive race beating McMahon of U.C.D. by a margin of almost 80 metres. Regrettable, it must be said that it was not a meeting of quality. Some reports in the following day's newspapers asserted that "the bizarre emphasis on competition in examinations have taken a toll on general sporting activities". It was claimed that the balance between activities inside and outside the lecture halls was not being preserved. This claim was supported by the fact that the 5000 metres had to be put back till late evening because some of the competitors were engaged in examinations and it transpired that the result would depend upon placings in that event. Whatever point of view is taken, it must be accepted however, that the switching of the exam dates to late May and early June did have a negative influence on both participation and attendance at the Races. The prospect of having major examinations a few days later was not the ideal recipe to entice people to "make a day of the races". Colours were awarded that year to D. O'Carroll, M. Barr, F. McNamara, A. Barry, M. Connolly, N. Murphy, P. Dunne, S. Berkely, S. Smith, K. Walshe, K. Mills, L. Adams, G. Guckian, P. O'Reilly, R. Trautnam, D. Spring, P. Conroy and A. Olumide.

The new decade began with one of the most frustrating year's Trinity have ever had. The Irish Universities Championships and the J. P. O'Sullivan Trophy were lost by a single point. The result hinged about the pole vault competition; had our vaulter cleared a single height in the vault, we would have rescued a famous victory. Luck was not on our side and M. Denehy saw the bar drop three times at the opening height. The captain, P. O'Reilly, and his men left Cork a very dejected bunch indeed.

The following year passed without great incident. The College Races was once again conspicuous only by its mediocrity. A few international guests did however grace the occasion but their efforts sadly went almost un-noticed in a deserted College Park. Indeed, so deserted was the Park at 2.30pm that the start had to be delayed by a half hour in the hope that a few passers-by might stroll in. They would have been welcome to compete as well as to watch. The 100 metres was won by Anderson with Cauldwell of St. Mary's, London taking the invitation 1000 yards. The Irish University Championships did however produce a number of good performances including Denis Finnerty's double in the 400 metres and 110 metres hurdles. The latter was won in a time of 14.8 seconds which was a new college record. Noel Murphy and Ritchie Robinson ran in first and second places in the 800 metres, Murphy's victory being particularly sweet as he had formerly been a U.C.D. star. Noel Harvey showed his great talent in taking the 5000 metres early from Hilliard of U.C.D. Harvey has since become one of the country's most formidable long distance runners. His performances with Trinity have all been outstanding, — I can say that since he first ran in an Irish Universities track and field championships with the team, he never finished in lower place than first, except on one occasion when he was second to D.U.H.A.C.'s Kingston Mills. Despite the good performance, Trinity could only manage 87 points against U.C.D.'s 145.5.

During the opening years of this period (1965–1985), the Harriers experience mixed fortunes in competition. The club generally held its own as regards colours matches but the best performance in the Intervarsity was a second place in the Phoenix Park in 1967. Matters improved during the 1970–71 season where the team came second in the club's invitation race, its best performance in that particular race up to that point, the colours match was won with same style and then in the Intervarsity in Maynooth, placed second. The following year did not see such strong team performances repeated but as consolation, R. Walker won the individual title in the Intervarsity and a few weeks later, to the delight of his team mates who were on Tour, was the first Irishman home in the International Junior Cross Country Championships in Cambridge, leaving in his wake a certain E. Coughlan. The team improved their performance during the 1972–1973 season with a crushing win against U.C.D. and once more were runners-up in the Intervarsity to the extreme frustration of all concerned. For a few years afterwards, the team found the going tougher and victories of note were scarce. Matters started to improve when we won the 1976 colours match and then came third in the Intervarsity the

following March. For the next few years, we came frustratingly close to emulating the club's win in the inaugural race for the Green Fox Trophy. In 1977–78, we beat U.C.D. in the colours match only to have them repay the compliment in the Intervarsity. The 1978–79 season saw another victory in the colours match but a weakened team lost the Intervarsity by a few points to U.C.G., who had dragged out of retirement for the occasion the stars of their unbroken succession of victories from 1970 to 1975. The only consolation that day was the fact that P. Dunne won the individual title. December 1979 saw the team win the colours match for the fourth time in a row and then the following March, they travelled to Belfast for the Intervarsity. In one of the most exciting races ever experienced by those present, the club won the Intervarsity title by one point from Queens. The victory was due not only to the fact that R. Dooney and K. Mills were first and second respectively but also to the rest of the team, P. Dunne, J. Maher, S. Attwood and N. Harvey who battled for every possible place right to the finish line. The title was lost the following year in Galway but we regained it in 1982. This was a much easier and more comprehensive win than the one two years previously, our pack being far superior to any of the opposition teams. On this occasion, the club also provided the individual winner in the person of N. Harvey. Since then, matters have been a little bleaker with the second place in the 1984 Intervarsity the club's best performance in recent years.

1982 was not a particular success from an athletic point of view back on the track. The highlight of the year was the running of the Irish University Championships in College Park. Noel Harvey was again our best performer. The team was weakened due to injury and as usual U.C.D. took home the P. J. O'Sullivan Trophy. One year later in Belfast, Noel Harvey again set a new record in 3000 metres steeplechase to complete a double having previously won the 5000 metres. Conor Mulcahy also had a very useful double in the hammer and discus. The College Races of '83 witnessed some great changes. Due to the declining interest of recent years, the inter club relays were held on the same day and the traditional reception held in the pavilion bar for the president of Ireland was scrapped. The strawberries and cream, the V.I.P. tents and the attendance of the President will all sadly be missed as they played more than their part in contributing to the atmosphere of one of the oldest sporting fixtures in the world. A charity element was also introduced — the proceeds from the races to go to a third world appeal. You could say that it was a shame to take away such a vital ingredient from the races but on the other hand, I feel it would be even more of a shame to see the tradition dying on its feet.

To return to the runners, Eugene Curran proved himself to be a half-miler of note by beating a strong field to take the 800 metres in the fine time of 1.52.8 at the Varsity Championships. Another new event to grace the Trinity Week was established by some quick thinkers on the committee. Liam Lysaght and Peter Campbell based the event on

the film of the same name, the “Chariots of Fire” race, which was in fact a race round front square. It proved to be quite a success and was won by Denis Finnerty in a time of 49.1 seconds with Alan Gilsenan and Brendan Mullin close behind. Since then, the event has gone from strength to strength and now is an established part of the Trinity Week’s entertainment. The club’s activities were not confined to track and field however. A mammoth sponsored run in aid of the blind was completed from Ennis to Dublin on what was one of the coldest weekends of the year. One of the most welcome sights of the year was the famous pub, “Dirty Nelly’s” in Bunratty after an early morning start from Ennis. At the A.G.M., Peter Campbell was elected as new captain.

The 1983–84 season was to prove a turning point for the D.U.H.A.C. our coach Dan Kennedy who took charge of circuits in the gym and then on Saturday mornings, often supervised a track and field session, injected new life into the squad. Captain Peter Campbell through his hard work set the pattern for what was to be a modestly successful year in itself, but more importantly, laid the foundations for the 1985 year which he felt should be a great one to put the “icing on the centenary cake” as it were. The first outing was a journey to Thomond College, Limerick for a match against their club and to undergo a battery of fitness and body function tests supervised by Dr. Tony Watson, the well known sports physiologist. The tour of the Netherlands which took place in March was the next outing. Three straight victories did much for our confidence especially the victory in the cross country run against Tillburg University in which all the team took part — a most unusual sight indeed to see the sprinters and throwers trundling their way through the mud. Perhaps the performance which most epitomised the spirit of the team was that of Patrick Hernon who in the second match of the tour ran in the 100 metres, the 400 metres and the 5000 metres, a most unusual treble! Though he did not win any of the events, that eagerness and drive was passed throughout the team. We arrived home a satisfied team looking forward to a fruitful campaign on the domestic athletic front. Two of the most unusual events in which we ever competed were included in the final match of the tour — the 67.415 meters sprint and the 1375 metres. The former was re-named after the first date on which that event took place (the club championships of Enschede Technical College). Denis Finnerty took the first place in 7.8 seconds just 1/10th outside the record with P. Campbell in third place in 8.0 seconds. Joe Peppard ran a great race to win the 1375 metres. Robin Bryson, one of the team’s characters, had some difficulty in negotiating the steeplechase water jump, and had it not been for his lively crawl he would probably have had to give up after the first lap. Incidentally, Robin and Eoin Rothery took part in the European Orienteering Championships that week in Belgium and both scored well.

The Irish University Championships were held in Belfield and nothing could stop the U.C.D. team from taking their fifth title in a row. Despite some good performances we were pipped on the last event by Queen’s for second place. Conor Mulcahy again proved

his value to the club by scoring a double in the hammer and discus, his participation did not end there however, he also competed in the shot putt and triple jump. The team owes a great debt to Conor who was always willing to fill in and give of his best in any event. Curran and Rothery had a 1, 2 in the 800 metres. Denis Finnerty overcame injury problem and took the 110 metres hurdles. At the end of the year, both Finnerty and Mulcahy were awarded 'Pinks' for performances. At the general meeting, Finnerty was elected captain and Mr. George Dawson took the chair as the new club president.

The new committee immediately addressed the matter of the Centenary year. "Was it? Or was it not?" was the first puzzle which had to be resolved. The consensus was that the most fitting way to celebrate our centenary year would be to reassert Trinity as the premier university club in the country, and having achieved that, to organise a dinner to share our success with the former D.U.H.A.C. members. It was decided also that some form of publication to mark the occasion would be a worthwhile venture.

It is appropriate then that the centenary year was one of the most successful ever in the long history of our club. From the opening date, the evening meet at Santry Stadium against Liffey Valley, Clonliffe and the visiting Dutch team from Enschede Technical College, to the final track meet at the Varsities Championships we were undefeated. Between both was a succession of memorable performances, none better than wins against Queens and Edinburgh Universities on the Malone Track and a closely fought victory against the National League champions, Raheny Shamrocks in the Inter Club Relays to take the Vice-President's Cup. The colours and hence, the George Dawson Trophy was also brought back to Trinity for the first time in six years.

To single out individuals in such a team effort is a very difficult task indeed. The universities championships is the best place to begin. After the successful build up, hopes were high that we could lift the P. J. O'Sullivan cup for the first time since '61. A few late withdrawals from the team dampened our spirits somewhat, the week before the big day. Some could not be helped however and the club wished Brendan Mullin every success on his forthcoming trip to Japan with the Irish rugby team. The club was proud of his achievements during a year which saw him make a valuable contribution to Ireland's Triple Crown win.

Nonetheless, we had potent tricks up our sleeves in the form of S. McBride, a man who ran 10.7 in the 100 metres to be beaten only by the power of S. Baird of Queens who was shortlisted for the British Olympic team. He was also beaten into second by Baird in the 200 metres.

The old stagers, led by captain D. Finnerty, paved the way for victory. Finnerty took part in six events. He began the day in the best possible fashion by easily taking the 400 metres hurdles in a fast 54.6 seconds and followed this with a fifth placing in the 100 metres and shortly after took the 110 metres hurdles title in 15.0 seconds. It was, however, a tired but elated athlete who accepted the apologies of U.C.D. at the

Varsities Ball that evening for overlooking to bring the J. P. O'Sullivan Trophy with them to Cork.

Eugene Curran ran an excellent 1500 metres race to win from Kirk of Queens in a high class field. This victory capped what was a fine universities career. Noel Harvey again lapped almost everybody in the field despite running in flat shoes to smash the 10000 metres record and Brendan Curtin, top Irish decathlete and superstar, scored highly in all his events, his best moment being the javelin competition. With one throw remaining, he was in second place behind Smith of U.C.D. In his final throw, he unleashed a superb effort which sailed past the 50 metres mark like a bird to land well beyond the U.C.D. man's best. P. Lawless gained valuable points when he finished in third place in the same event. The same Curtin also scored highly in the shot putt where he was second in the 110 metres hurdles finishing fourth and in the long jump where he also filled the fourth sport. Conor Mulcahy finished the day with a third place in the hammer which was a very closely fought competition and the discus where it took a new record by R.C.S.I. athlete, M. Sweeney, to push him into second place. The new colour, H. McDermott, ran a great race in the 800 metres to finish in second place to Kirk of Queens but both men ran faster than the old record. A word of praise must also go the ladies especially Dara Shakespeare who again broke the javelin record and M. Nolan who took the 400 metres hurdles also in new record time.

Colours were awarded at the end of the year to Finnerty, A. Gilsenan, H. McDermott, B. Curtin, E. Curran, E. Rothery, N. Harvey, J. Peppard, K. Sherlock, P. Lawless, C. Mulcahy, J. Sexton, S. McBride, G. McNulty, P. Cosgrave, D. Watson, N. Geoghegan, G. Lunney and M. Mullins. Conor Mulcahy was elected new captain.

And so, to the 1985–86 season. D.U.H.A.C. will host the Inter-Varsity Championships in College Park, where hopefully the club will retain the J. P. O'Sullivan Cup. But that is another unwritten story. Today, one can reflect on a colourful past which bestows on all members of D.U.H.A.C., past, present and future, a heritage of aspiration, hope and vitality. That is enough for now. Athletics is not important in itself, but in what it represents. To modify a contemporary catch-phrase:

“I know, it's only running, 'n' jumping 'n' throwing — but I like it!”



Figure 20: Dublin University Harriers team of 1938:

Back Row (l-r): S. A. Moore, H. D. Chomse, R. E. G. Sides.

Front Row (l-r) : J. W. T. Tuckey, D. H. McNeill, 11, P. L. Rice.