REDACCIÓN DE LA GACETA

ACERCA DE LA PORTADA:

Por una afortunada coincidencia, en este último número en el que LA GACETA dedica sus portadas a Martin Gardner con ocasión de su centenario aparecen tres piezas dedicadas, de una u otra manera, a la divulgación de las matemáticas: una crónica de la última edición de Ciencia en Acción, un artículo sobre la Galería de Matemáticas, Ciencia y Tecnología «El Árbol de las Matemáticas», y una entrevista con el ganador del Premio Leelavati, Adrián Paenza.

Con Paenza las coincidencias van más allá puesto que, igual que sucede con Gardner, su abrumadora actividad se extiende a campos un tanto alejados de la divulgación con la que la mayoría de nuestros lectores les identificarán.

En el caso de Martin Gardner sus intereses, aparte de la popularización de las matemáticas y de la ciencia en general, se extendían a la microomagia, la filosofía, la religión, la literatura y, de manera destacada, el «escepticismo científico»: entre otros escritos, entre 1983 y 2002 publicó una columna mensual en la revista *Skeptical Inquirer* en la que, de manera ininterrumpida, se dedicaba a desenmascarar supercherías, falsas creencias y, sobre todo, pseudociencia. Este aspecto de la actividad de Gardner llamó la atención del escritor e ilustrador Geoff Olson (http://geoffolson.com/) quien, en marzo de 2004, publicó en *Yukon News* el artículo «Martin Gardner: genius debunker», al que acompañaba la imagen que aparece en nuestra portada y por cuya autorización de uso le estamos muy agradecidos.

El título del artículo, que puede leerse en http://geoffolson.com/page6/page6/page6.html, podría quizás traducirse como «Martin Gardner: desenmascarador genial» o «desmitificador genial». Pero estas traducciones no recogerían el sentido exacto de la palabra *debunker*, que corresponde en este contexto al significado «ridiculizar» del verbo *debunk*. Olson presenta, y dibuja, a Gardner como un escritor muy dotado, de mente brillante e impresionante amplitud de miras, pero que, en su opinión, en ocasiones utiliza su acerada pluma para atacar con excesiva crudeza tanto a los propagadores de teorías pseudocientíficas como a algunos iconos de la cultura popular (uno de los objetos de su irrisión que Olson pone como ejemplo es la película *Encuentros en la Tercera Fase*, dirigida por Steven Spielberg).

Aunque Olson critique el estilo agresivo de Gardner, a quien por otra parte considera «un genio a la hora de resumir lúcidamente ideas complejas usando agudos giros», pensamos que su artículo presenta una visión distinta de la arrolladora personalidad de nuestro personaje. Confiamos en que despierte la curiosidad de los lectores por esos escritos de Martin Gardner que son menos conocidos por la comunidad matemática.

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Índice

FUNERAL TRIBUTE TO PROFESSOR P. G. GORMLEY

The deep sense of public sorrow at the death of Professor Philip G. Gormley, U.C.D., a native of Carnanbane, Claudy, was strikingly manifested at the obsequies in St. Joseph's church, Carnanbane.

On the previous evening the remains had been removed from the home of his brother, Patrick, to St. Joseph's in the presence of a large gathering of mourners. The remains were received at the church by Rev. Michael Mullan, C.C., Carnanbane. Very Rev. B. Kielt, P.P., V. F., Faughanvale, was also present.

The church was crowded on Saturday for concelebrated Requiem Mass, the principal celebrant being Rev. Gerard E. O'Neill, C.C., Culdaff. The other celebrants were Very Rev. Hugh McGurk P.P. D.D., Buncrana, Rev. B. O'Neill, Adm. St. Eugene's Derry, and Father Mullan.

In a beautiful discourse reminding the people of their duty to pray for the happy repose of deceased's soul and for all the faithful departed, Father Gerard O'Neill said that there was no need to eulogise the life's achievements of the late Professor Gormley. The priests and people expressed their sympathy with the immediate relatives and with the other relatives of the deceased, and also with the professorial staff of University College, Dublin, on the death of their illustrious colleague.

Most Rev. Dr. Farren, Bishop of Derry, and Most Rev. Dr. O'Doherty, Bishop of Dromore, were represented at the obsequies. The late Professor Gormley had been their pupil during his years in St. Columb's College, which was represented by its president, Very Rev. James A. Coulter, B.D., B.C.L.

There was a very large attendance of clergy of the diocese of Derry as well as priests from other northern dioceses. Several clergy of the Archdiocese of Dublin were represented, including Very Rev. Aubrey Gwynn, S. J. Emeritus Professor of History in C.C.D., a close personal friend and colleague of the deceased.

THE CHIEF MOURNERS WERE:

Mrs. Angela Deeney and Mrs. Catherine McSorley (sisters); Thomas C., Patrick J. and George (brothers); Mary Deeney, Peggy Deeney, D.O.M., Dolores Deeney, B.Sc., Rose Deeney, Patricia Deeney, P.T., Geraldine Deeney, P.T., Mrs. Dorothy Tracey, Mrs. Colette Cummins, B.Sc., Jennifer Gormley, B. Ed., Mrs. Ann Walters, Mrs. Kathryn Brick, Mrs. Joan Barnes, Mary Gormley, Louise Gormley, Suzanne Gormley and Angela Gormley (nieces); John Deeney, A.C.I.I., Dublin, Philip Deeney and Seamus Deeney, Philip Gormley, B.Sc., Manchester, Padraig Gormley, Michael P. McSorley, B.Sc., Econ., Gerard McSorley, B.A., Tom Gormley and Paul Gormley

(nephews); Mrs. Gertie Gormley, Mrs. Moira Gormley and Mrs. Shella Gormley (sisters-in-law); Noel Tracy, Hugh Cummins, B.Sc., Gareth Walters, J. Barnes and Dr. Ian Brick, Ph.D. (nephews-in-law); Mrs. Moira McSorley, P.T. (niece-in-law).

Representatives attending from University College, Dublin, included Professor R. Timmoney (who also represented the President and Senate of U.C.D.), Professor Kennedy and Professor M. Bates, as well as a special delegation of the undergraduate and postgraduate students who were studying under the late Professor Gormley. Also represented was Professor J. H. Delargy, for many years head of the Bealoideas Commission of Ireland.

The general attendance included many people prominent in public life, not only from the county and the North-West in general but from all parts of Ireland, as well as the professional and commercial classes. Above all, every home in his native parish, which was so proud of his distinguished career that had brought honour to Claudy and district, had a representative at the Mass and interment, which took place in the cemetery adjoining the church.

Hundreds
of mes-
sages of
sympa-
thy were
received
by the
bereaved
relatives.

(R. TO L) THOMAS GORMLEY; DAUGHTER, JENNIFER; WIFE GERTIE; PADDY'S SON, PADRAIG; PADDY; GEORGE GORMLEY HIS SONS, PAUL AND TOM; AND WIFE, SHELIA
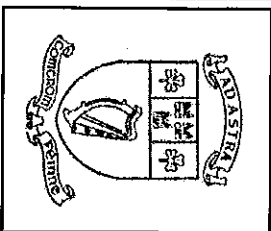
UNIVERSITY COLLEGE DUBLIN

President's Office
Administration
Belfield
Dublin 4

Telephone 693244

PRESIDENT
THOMAS MURPHY, M.D.

14 February 1974

Mr. Patrick Gormley B.A.,
Carnabane,
Claudy,
CO Derry.

Dear Mr. Gormley,

The Governing Body of the University College Dublin was informed at a recent meeting that the library of the late **Professor Philip Gormley** has now been deposited in our College Library. This is a most valuable acquisition for the College, and the members of the Governing Body requested that their appreciation be communicated to the relatives of **Professor Gormley.** I should like to add also my own gratitude for this important and generous donation.

Yours sincerely,

Thomas Murphy
President

JEP/ac

COLONEL MARTIN BATES (PROF. OF RUSSIAN, U.C.D.), MRS. BATES AND UNCLE PHIL.

UNCLE PHIL (left) IN A RARE MOMENT OF RELAXING AT THE BEACH

51 Leopardstown Avenue
Blackrock
Co. Dublin
29th April 1972

Dear Tony,

I am glad to hear that your thesis is going so well, and I wish you good luck in future. I found a copy of the Erevan 1965 conference on Complex Analysis lying about, and I had a look into it, and saw an article by J. Wermer. I have learned what Gleason parts are, it often puzzled me and it seems an interesting idea, it seems to be popular as I have seen it mentioned so often. I have given up teaching Complex Variable, as they have new courses now.

As you asked I made unofficial enquires about a job locally, but I doubt if there is any money this year, and I hope that it will ease itself next year. There is a post in Cork, but they are more interested in getting an Algerbraist and you should consider whether you ought to consider such a post. My advice is to stay at Brown next year, and fill out your qualifications in such a direction if you feel it an advantage, and make full use of the library to give you additional strength to be ready to cope with much less in the matter of reading facilities when you leave. If there were a fit appointment open now, I would advise you to take it, but it does not seem to be there now. I would advise you to write to Cork, sending your name, and requisite details. I think you will be able to put all the necessary details on one page. The Cork school is strong on Complex Variables so you can give an indication of what you are doing. I would mention your work in U.C.D. at the I.B.M., and state what you could do about teaching Programming (at elementary level), and give briefly the list of subjects you could handle safely up to Honours Degree B.A. or B.Sc level, and be brief. Your application is late, but I did not know of the job at the time, so you can apolgize for that part, but they may wish to consider your qualifications. Give Schlesinger's name as a reference, as he knows the set-up in Ireland.

I have been lucky with my own work latterly, and I am now very happy with what I have found out about Integration Theory. I continued after you left, with McKenna, but we left Hewitt & Stromberg, but I still thought about some things and was rewarded for trying. I was reading Lebesgue's book 2nd. ed. and I see W.H. Young proposed a scheme like the Loomis, and a lot more; but I don't think he proved his results and also, it is not for a linear functional.

You can let me know what you have decided to do, I was speaking to Professor Paddy Barry yesterday, and he has not yet considered the applications so, while he said it was late, you can still send on yours, and tell them that you are prepared to stay at Brown for next year, or take the job in Oct., 1972 if that is in the best interest of U.C.C.

I wish the best of luck and happiness in your forthcoming marriage and assure you of my fullest help at all times. Again, I am glad that you are getting on well, and wish you would thank Professors Wermer, Cole and Browder for their help and guidance, and I congratulate you on the successful outcome.

Best wishes,

Yours Sincerely,

Philip G. Gormley

[THIS WAS PENNED BY PHIL TO TONY O'FARRELL - WHO IS ALSO THE AUTHOR OF THE POEM ON THE PREVIOUS PAGE.]

Ars Longa, Vita Brevis
By his former student Tony

Professor P.G Gormley provked mixed reactions.
Many thought him mad. I loved the man.
He wasn't mad at all, not any more than
the rest of us. He was just one of those people
with no small talk. He was just one of those people
repelled some people, but I've always felt
that small-talk isn't everything, provided
you have some big-talk.

He wrote to me, when I was in America,
thinking of coming home.

There's a job in Cork, he wrote,
and you should apply.
Put it on a page,
and be brief.

He was talking about my life, or at least,
the bits of my life that Cork would relish
reading about.

But "put it n a page" is not a bad
principle for general purposes.

My vita still fits on a page.
I fork it out, every now and again,
and add fresh straw.

EXAM SUMMED UP IN OT NE P APP E R

Sections A and B to be answered in separate answer books.

SECTION A

1. Find the characteristic function of the probability distribution

$$\frac{n}{\pi} \frac{\sin(\pi/2n)}{(z^{2n}+1)} \, dx, \quad -\infty < x < +\infty.$$

n integral and give such moments as exist when $n = 2$. Examine the characteristic function

$$s^n (1 + s - e^{+s})^{-n}, s > 0$$

n integral for discontinuities of the frequency function and find this function.

2. If ξ is a normal variate in standard form and χ obeys a chi-squared law, derive the distribution of $t = \xi\sqrt{v}/\chi$. Show that the sum of the squares of independent χ^s obeys a similar law and show that the frequency function of χ^2 is, for large v, approximately normal with mean v and variance $2v$. Derive, with full proof, for a normal population a test of the significance of the difference between the sample mean x and a predicted population mean m.

D 585—2/3

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                    Best wishes,
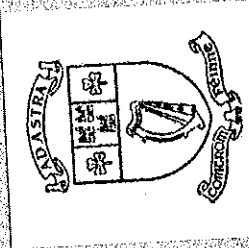   Yours sincerely,

                              Philip G. Gormley

PHILIP G. GORMLEY MA,PhD

Philip Gerard Gormley was born at Claudy, Co. Derry, on 22 August 1910 learned his pre-university mathematics with Reverend Dr. Neil Farren, afterwards Bishop of Derry, in St. Columb's College. Derry, and entered University College Dublin with a first class entrance scholarship and the Limavady Regional University Scholarship in October, 1927. He was awarded first class honours and scholarships in all his examinations and graduated in the Faculty of Arts in 1930. He won a keenly contested Mathematical Science Travelling Studentship of the National University in 1931 and was awarded a first class honours M.A.

He studied in the University of Edinburgh under the late Professor E.T. Whitaker, later Sir Edmund Whitaker, and obtained Ph.D. degree in 1933.

He returned to University College in October,1933 as an Assistant. He was appointed by the National University as Statutory Lecturer in Mathematics in 1937, Statutory Lecturer in Pure and Applied Mathematics in 1943 and Professor of Mathematics in 1947. He gave what proved to be his last lecture to the Third Year Honours Class on 5 December, 1972 and after a short illness died on 15 February, 1973 at the age of sixty-two. **Professor Gormley's** researches extended over very wide fields in pure and applied mathematics and included some very difficult papers on the special functions arising in mathematical physics.

In recent years **Professor Gormley** acquired a knowledge of Russian, German and Polish, in addition French which he knew from his youth. He was an expert translator into English of Russian research papers for the London Mathematical Society. He was a life-member of the Royal Irish Academy, The London Mathematical Society, The Edinburgh Mathematical Society and The American Mathematical Society.

Although a man of few words who was fond of the remark **"No marks for rubbish"**, he was very kind and was well loved by his colleagues, who have cause to mourn him as a person; but above all to regret the loss of his vast knowledge of mathematics which was always so generously given.

THE PASSING OF PHILIP GORMLEY
IN 1973 AS REPORTED BY
UNIVERSITY COLLEGE DUBLIN.

UNIVERSITY COLLEGE DUBLIN

Report of the President

For the session 1972 - 73

December 1973

"..a man of few words who was fond of
the remark, *No marks for rubbish.*"

Sources for the

HISTORY OF IRISH CIVILISATION

Articles in Irish Periodicals

Edited by

Richard J. Hayes, LL.D., LITT. D.

Director, National Library of Ireland

1940 - 1967

Volume 2

Persons   D - H

A LISTING OF SOME OF HIS PUBLISHED PAPERS.

Gormley (P.G.): The wave-equation corresponding to a given Hamiltonian. (Ryal Irish Academy Proc.,Vol XLII, Sect. A, pp. 1-6, May, **1934**).

Gormley (Philip G.): Gormley (P.G.): The zeros of Legendre functions. (Royal Irish Academy Proc. Vl. XLIV, Sect. A, pp. 29-43, Sept., **1937**).

Gormley (Philip G.): Nolan (J.J.) and P.J. Nolan: Diffusion and fall of atmospheric condensation nuclei. With an appendix by P.G. Gormley. (Royal Irish Academy Proc., Vol. XLV, Sect. A, pp. 47-63, Nov., **1938**).

Gormley (P.G.): and W. Heitler: On the connection of Dirac's quantum-electrodynamics and the theory of radiation damping. With correction. (Royal Irish Academy Proc., Vl. L, Sect. A, pp. 29-49, Sept., 1944, pp. 271-2, Nov., **1945**).

Gormley (Philip G.): Gormley (P.G.): Stereographic projection and the linear fractional group of transformations of quanternions. (Royal Irish Academy Proc., Vol. Ll, Sect. A, pp. 67-85, Jan., **1947**).

Gormley (P.G.) and M. Kennedy: Diffusion from a stream flowing through a cylindrical tube. (Royal Irish Academy Proc., Vol. Lll, Sect. A, pp. 163-9, May, **1949**).

$$q^{q'} = P(q', P^{-1}q);$$ (392)

and thus we shall have a general expression for any power of a numeral set, though the sum of the characteristics of the exponential and exponential thereof.

Application to Quaternions; Amplitude and Vector Unit: Coordinate, Radius, and Representative Point.

40. On applying these general principles to the case of a quaternion, we have first by (387),

$$Pq = P(w + ix + jy + kz) = Pw.P(ix + jy + kz);$$ (393)

and then, if we use the notations (345), and attend to the connexion already established between quaternions and couples, we find that

$$P(ix + jy + kz) = P(ir) = \cos r + i \sin r; \quad i^2 = -1;$$ (394)

where $\cos r$ and $\sin r$ denote, as usual, the cosine and sine of r, so that, in the theory of couples, the following equation holds good:

$$P(0, r) = (\cos r, \sin r).$$ (395)

(Compare the earlier essay)

Thus the exponential of a quaternion q is expressed generally, with these notations, by the formula.

$$Pq = Pw.(\cos r + i \sin r).$$ (396)

Reciprocally the exponential $P^{-1}q'$, of any other quaternion q', is to be found by comparing this formula (396) with the expression of that quaternion q', when put under the form,

$$q' = w' + i'r' = \mu'(\cos\theta' + i\sin\theta').$$ (397)

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OLLSCOIL NA hEIREANN, Ma Nuad
MA NUAD, CO. CHILL DARA, EIRE

[Maynooth College seal — FOUNDED 1795]

ROINN NA MATAMAITICE
An t-Ollamh A.G. O Fearghail, M.Sc., Ph.D., M.R.I.A.
MAYNOOTH

NUI

Ollscoil na hEireann Nuad
6-2001

I enjoyed your visit yesterday, and hope we may meet again.

I am returning under separate cover the material you lent me.

Now that I've had time to examine it, I realize that I was mistaken about the contents of the blue-green notebook. It is indeed in **Gormley's** hand, but the contents are wholly the conception of W. R. Hamilton. The notebook contains a faithful and uncommented transcription of published work of Hamilton relating to quaternains. I will have to check the collected works to see, but they probably appeared in transactions Roy. In Acad. from 1843 onwards.

Either **Gormley** wrote it all out to learn it, in a fit of youthful enthusiasm, or he wrote it out to assist the production of the Collected Works. I mentioned that Timoney & Ingram (his collegues at UCD) were involved in editing these. When I get a chance I'll check whether there is any record of **G's** involvement.

Yours, with best regards,
Tony O'Farrell

National University of Ireland, Maynooth

COLLEGE AND OTHER APPOINTMENTS

THE PRESIDENT'S REPORT RECORDS SOME OF HIS MATHEMATICAL PAPERS THAT WERE PUBLISHED.

UNIVERSITY COLLEGE, DUBLIN

Report of the President

For the Session 1946-47

DECEMBER, 1947

PART II

DUBLIN
BROWNE AND NOLAN, LIMITED, NASSAU STREET
1947

LECTURESHIP IN PURE AND APPLIED MATHEMATICS:

PHILIP G. GORMLEY, M. A., Ph. D.

PROFESSORSHIP OF MATHEMATICS:

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PUUBLIC EXTENSION LECTURES:

PROFESSOR P. G. GORMLEY - "BABYLONIAN MATHEMATICS"

DEPARTMENT OF MATHEMATICS:

GORMLEY, P. G. AND W. HEITLER -
"ON THE CONNECTION OF DIRAC'S QUANTUM-ELECTRO-
DYNAMICS AND THE THEORY OF RADIATION DAMPING."
(PROC. R. I. A. 50 A. p. 29.)

DEPARTMENT OF MATHEMATICS:

GORMLEY, P. G. -
"STEROGRAPHIC PROJECTION AND THE LINEAR FRACTION-
AL GROUP OF TRANSFORMATIONS OF QUATERNIONS"
(PROC. ROY. IRISH ACAD. VOL 51 A. 1947, PP 67-81.)

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THE WAVE-EQUATION CORRESPONDING TO A GIVEN HAMILTONIAN

By P. G. GORMLEY

Read 22 May, 1933.
Published 4 May, 1934

When a given function $H(p,q)$ is the Hamiltonian which describes a system in classical mechanics, then the corresponding wave-equation in quantu mechanics is...

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Royal Irish Academy
19 Sraid Dasain
Baile Atha Cliath 2

le dea-mhein an leabharlannai
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FROM THE FAMOUS ROYAL IRISH ACADEMY
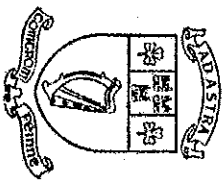
PHILIP GORMLEY'S PUBLISHED PAPERS

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16 September, 1997

Dear Mrs. Cummins,

I enclose some reprints of mathematical papers by the late **Phil Gormley**, together with a notebook in his hand which appears to be a copy of some work of Hamilton's presented to the Royal Irish Academy in 1843. I also enclose a reference to a joint paper of Phil's with the late Maurice Kennedy.

There is one further published piece of mathematics by **Phil** that I have seen - I referred to it in our phone conversation. It is an appendix to a paper on aerosols written by J.J. and P.J. Nolan and published sometime in the '40's, I think, in the PROCEEDINGS OF THE ROYAL IRISH ACADEMY, SECTION A.

Perhaps the people in the Library of the Royal Irish Academy could help you trace any other papers there may be by **Phil**.

Yours sincerely,

Fergus J. Gaines

AS A WORLD RENOWNED MATHEMATICIAN, PHILIP GORMLEY'S WORKS WERE PUBLISHED BY THE FAMOUS ROYAL IRISH ACADEMY.
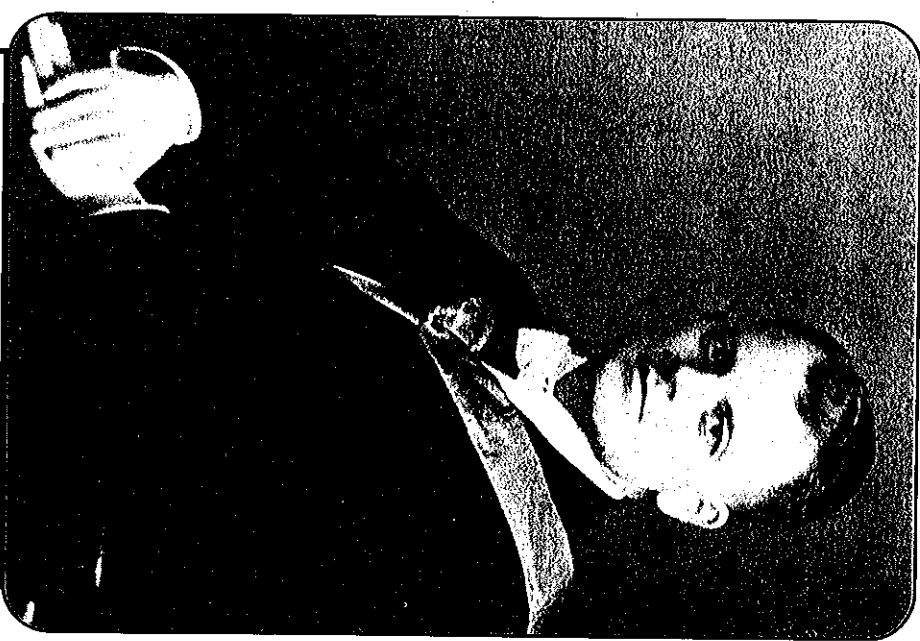
UNCLE PHIL'S
GRADUATION

On one occasion, he was collecting a new car …a Fiat 650…he rang me and asked me if I would accompany him because he needed a second driver to bring both cars back to his house. So, I drove the shining Fiat (very trusting of him!) while he drove the Renault since he was the only person to understand it's now multitudinous foibles. At the end of this exercise, he put £10 in my hand and I thought I had won the lottery.

After Graduation, I got a post in the Dept of Medical Microbiology in UCD, so we continued to get together regularly. It was either a meal/cinema in town or go out to his house in Leopardstown for tea after work. It was a substantial 4 bedroomed semi with a large back garden. On entering the front door, one was confronted with books, records, tapes, in seeming total disorder but he seemed to know where things were. Every room, upstairs and downstairs was full of packed-tight bookcases. Into the kitchen for tea. Again the table was covered in Dunnes bags,with bits of shopping in them, unemptied. Tea was usually ham and salad rooted out of one of these bags…and we sat down to eat on a few square inches cleared at one side of the table. We talked a lot about music (our main common interest). He bought records compulsively, and his collection of classical music was overwhelming, if totally disorganised. I was often dying to suggest that I tidy them all up and put them in some order (a) because I would have loved to have a really good look at them and (b) I felt he forgot what he had. I didn't, however, for fear of offending him. We would wade through the mess together (sometimes finding records still in their Mc Cullagh-Piggott bags). His main love was opera and German Lieder. He spoke Russian and German fluently (He studied these in order that he might read the Mathematical dissertations in these languages. In later years, he did a lot of translations of mathematical texts, especially Russian). Anyway, we would listen to Hugo Wolf singing, and discuss the poetry etc. He had old 78s of turn-of- the-century opera singers. One I remember was Louisa Tetrazzina He loved Goethe's Faust and Wagner's Ring. He gave me a guitar which was cast aside in his sitting room….probably bought on a whim. I still treasure it. He had all the Mozart Sonatas (in an impressive box), collections of the Mahler and Schubert Symphonies etc., etc. It was a treasure trove for a music lover. Our listening to music would then be interrupted while he watched his favourite TV programme " Softly Softly"..an English detective soap of the day. I hated it and couldn't understand why he liked it. Then, at around 9 o' clock, he would drive me home (usually carrying something he gave me, a book or a record).

When we got married in 1968, Uncle Phil gave me a beautiful Irish Silver Dish. He had very good taste and would always buy the very best. In 1971, when I came home on holiday from Zambia, we had our usual meeting in town. We lunched in the Unicorn and strolled down Grafton Street. He suggested we go into Mc Cullagh-Piggott's, he would like to buy me a record…as always, nothing but the best…while I politely loitered at the bargain rack, Uncle Phil was stuck into the BOXES at the other end of the shop which cost a fortune. He asked me did I have the Beethoven Symphonies? So, that was that. We emerged with this beautiful collection of Otto Klemperer's Beethoven Symphonies and I thought I had died and gone to heaven!

That was my last time to see Uncle Phil alive. He died in early 1973 while I was still in Zambia. He was only 62 and his dying was the last thing on my mind. I had always imagined myself returning to Dublin, and he'd be there, and we would take up where we left off….puttering around in his organised chaos. The lovely new Concert Hall was complete so we would perhaps enjoy the concerts there. Uncle Phil was always part of my life in Dublin, and I looked forward to doing something for HIM for a change. Sadly, it was not to be. *Colette*

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UNCLE PHIL by Colette Gormley

When I was growing up, Uncle Phil's academic achievements were spoken of in glowing terms. The whole family was intensely proud of his academic rise to excellence in UCD. He got Professorship of Maths, and then the Chair at a very young age.

For his part, Uncle Phil was the most simple, unassuming man. His passion was pure mathematics. The politics and social niceties of UCD's academic life were of no interest to him. He was totally dismissive of the lightweights who had time to indulge in the silly games to gain promotion or whatever! If they found HIM an eccentric bachelor or an oddball, he didn't give a hoot!

When I went to UCD in 1963, I was delighted to join his faculty to do Maths but in conjunction with Chemistry and Biochemistry…..…not a Pure Maths degree (Uncle Phil lectured to this group). During the first term, students who had ambitions to pursue this highly prestigious course joined Uncle Phil's class in droves. Most were young full-of- themselves males who thought that, because they had got an A in their Leaving Cert Maths, next stop was NASA! Uncle Phil, however, had other ideas. HIS agenda was to spend this first term weeding out the wheat from the chaff. (He did the same every year). So, he spent that term filling the massive blackboard in the lecture theatre with a maze of mind-bogglingly incomprehensible equations. The faint-hearted drifted away one by one (back into my group). In the coffee dock, one could hear them discuss this eccentric nutter with the Northern accent!! After Christmas, the class was now reduced to a small select band of genuine Maths students, so the proper course started in earnest. It was this group who adored him and recognised his genius. A friend of ours here in Dublin, Jim Mc Ilvanny (he got a Ph.D. in civil engineering in UCD in the early 60's) tells an anecdote widely recounted in UCD at that time about Uncle Phil. Three highly regarded, eminent, engineering academics were in the coffee dock trying to formulate an equation to deal with whatever they were working on. It had been exercising their brains for many days, maybe weeks, and they were getting nowhere. Uncle Phil was in the queue waiting to get his coffee and as he passed their table, they briefly outlined their problem. Without stopping in his tracks Uncle Phil leaned over, took a paper serviette, scribbled down the solution and continued to queue for his coffee. It was right and they were very impressed! His students are now professors in universities all over the world. In 1993 when Laura thought she might study Astrophysics in Glasgow University, I took her over to chat to someone there about the course. We were met by a Professor Hickey, who had been a student of Uncle Phil's. He became quite emotional when he learned that Laura was Professor Gormley's grandniece. The particularly talented mathematicians who stuck the pace had enormous respect for him.

My dealings with Uncle Phil were purely of a social nature. The Maths course I was following was not too arduous and I coped without involving him. I was also aware that his ability and mine were on two vastly different planes and I didn't want him to realise that I was a real "thick" (by his lofty standards). So, we would meet in the Unicorn Restaurant (off Merrion Row),have lunch, and then maybe go to the cinema. I saw Cinerama with him. In third year of college, when I started going out with Hughie, on those occasions we became a three-ball! If we met in UCD, we had a chat but he was usually dashing to some lecture and so was I. He looked every inch the typical absent-minded professor, his gown hanging off him and covered in white chalk dust. On the last day of each term throughout my college days, Uncle Phil would always arrange with Dolores (Deeny) and myself to meet him in town and he'd give us a lift home. On these journeys, we'd set sail in his clapped out baby blue Renault (heater not working, so we froze!). The snippets of conversation I remember were his figuring out Distances/Time e.g. Ardee to Castleblaney…12 miles…it's quarter past 10 now…… if we average 45mph we'll be there by whatever! And we should be in Monaghan at 27 minutes to 12 for a cup of coffee. He was immensely kind. Always asked did I need money or anything. I always said no, but was delighted when he chose to stuff a £5 in my hand.

As a result of those studies in Russian, he was able to tell Daddy that the Sputnik of the 1950s should not come as a shock to the West as it had done, because all the mathematical formulae which underpinned Sputnik were available on public record within Russian mathematical journals of the day. All that was needed was some Western reader with both relevant knowledge of both Russian and of mathematical language. Towards the end of his life, he spent a lot of his evenings upon the translation of Russian mathematical texts into English. This came about at a time in his life when he had become rather solitary and rather a recluse.

For one of the problems from which Uncle Phil suffered was that he was so phenomenally intelligent and to a degree so orientated in his brilliance towards mathematics that he had problems in communicating with the ordinary individual. Allied to that, he had the Ulsterman's dislike of all the waffling and politicking which went on in the likes of University College Dublin. Uncle Phil was concerned about one thing and one thing only; namely, the quality of performance and in ensuring that there was a rigorous and proper education imparted to all his students. I have come across quite a few of these down through the years in major Accountancy practices in Dublin and so on. Every one of them spoke highly of the man.

In the summer of 1972, when I was home on holidays from England, he invited me down to stay with him in Leopardstown Avenue. The house in which I stayed was decidedly that of the bachelor bibliophile. There were books everywhere. It was none too clean a house. But nevertheless, he was ever a most civil, gentle and tolerant host. I got the impression then of a rather sad and lonely man with very limited, far too limited, human contacts, who nevertheless could not but impress you with the strength of that fantastic brain of his, of the catholicity of its tastes, and the lightness with which that genius and catholicity were carried. Uncle Phil continued to visit up in Carnanbane from time to time.

He always landed there fully laden with presents - he recognised that circumstances had changed dramatically in Carnanbane after the accident and he just quietly continued to "do his bit". Again, in his trips to Carnanbane, he ever came across with that unassuming modesty which was ever in his gift. If he had one passion, it was the obsessive need to take photographs at nearly every turnabout; but these passions, I think, can be entirely forgiven in a lonely man such as him.

Early on in about December of that year, a telephone call came one day to me in work in Manchester. It was Uncle George who told me that Uncle Phil had had an accident in his car, and that the doctors had diagnosed a stroke. The news left me shattered, and I remember to this day being asked by my colleagues how come I was weeping. I went over to visit Uncle Phil the following January in hospital. It was a traumatic experience to see that great brain completely gone away and to see him reduced to the position of a child. Aunt Sheila was there talking down to him and I could gladly have strangled her for the insensitivity of her attitude. I looked at Uncle Phil and I wept to see him so utterly changed.

He died on 15th February 1973 and was buried along with his Mammy and Daddy in our grave in Craigbane Chapel graveyard. It was a bitter winter's day and none of his students made it up on time to attend the mass because of the characteristically appalling state of the roads "down South" that day. A contingent of his students did make it eventually that afternoon. They left a wreath on his grave with his little catchphrase "ta ta". Daddy was of course very much affected by Uncle Phil's passing. There was a close and strong bond between the two of them, not least that Daddy was for Uncle Phil, a proxy for his own father and mother at a later stage in his life. I can never forget him, for he was such a gentleman and had such a lovely sweet and generous soul. May his good and gentle soul rest in peace along with that of Daddy.

PHILIP GORMLEY

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MY MEMORIES OF UNCLE PHIL, by Philip Gormley

Uncle Phil was the eldest son of the Gormley family. After early education in Kilgort Primary School, he went on in due course to St. Columb's College, where he distinguished himself in a number of respects. He was a particularly fine mathematics student - his Senior Certificate results indicated marks such as 385 out of a possible 400 in one subject (we often wondered how he managed to lose the last 15 marks!) and a notable talent as a musician - he played the violin in the College Orchestra of the day. He went off to University College Dublin on the back of a County Council Scholarship, but not without significant financial sacrifice on the part of his father. Because Granddad had to sell a lorry which he had in the shop to pay Uncle Phil's fees at UCD. Uncle Phil was an exemplary student at UCD - he took short notes in the course of each lecture, and then transcribed them at night long-hand when he got back to his digs. He was exceptionally gifted in the point of mathematics - the whole subject came as naturally to him as breathing - with the result that when he graduated his marks "were the highest marks ever awarded in mathematics in the history of the University". (I quote this point nearly verbatim from the words of an article in the Derry Journal of the day reported in one of the "Fifty Years Ago" columns within that newspaper).

He continued his mathematical studies and in due course was awarded an MA and a PhD in mathematics. Around this time, he was up visiting in Carnanbane and he met one of the old neighbours who had obviously heard about his academic qualification. "Congratulations Phil! I hear you are now a Doctor! Did you know that I am suffering from a bit of a pain in the leg? I just wondered if you might be in a position to look at me..."

I first made the acquaintance of Uncle Phil when he came up to visit us in Carnanbane in the 1950s. Uncle Phil never married, you see, and he told Daddy afterwards that he always felt a bit insecure going to visit in the homes of most of his married brothers. But he always seemed to feel at ease coming to us in Carnanbane.
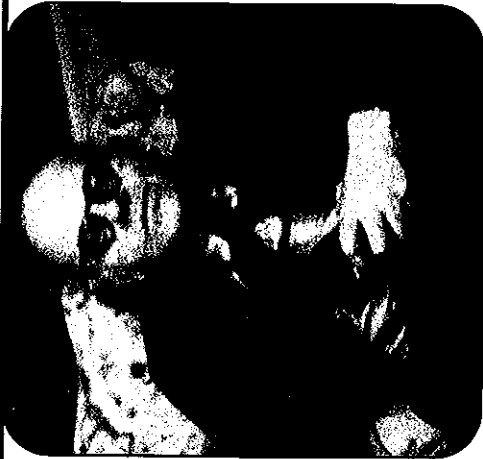
I think it must have been the pull of home roots! Certainly, he ever carried his education, indeed his genius, very lightly indeed. He was ever generous to a fault with all of us, and I remember being taken away on a shopping expedition to Coleraine just so he could get the chance to spend a bit of his money on us.

In about 1964 or thereabouts, Uncle Phil bought himself a house in Leopardstown Avenue near Stallorgan. As a family, we trekked down to him in early August of that year to stay there and to go to the Dublin Horse Show. We were back there again in both of the following years, and Uncle Phil was ever a most generous and unfussy host. I think the likes of my mother found it a bit traumatic to see how little regard Uncle Phil had for such tedious matters as cleaning and so on. But if so, she covered her discomfiture very well indeed.

As well as the mathematics, Uncle Phil was a man with several interests to keep that huge and taxing brain properly challenged at all times. He had ever kept in touch with music since his days in the College - there was a piano in the house and he had a most eclectic range of records and piano music. He had a passion for languages - at various stages he had studied German, Spanish and latterly Russian. Of all the languages which he studied, probably the most significant for him was the Russian. He learnt that language because he recognised that the finest mathematical writing of his time was done by Russian scholars and mathematicians. Therefore he determined to make the acquaintance of their work first-hand. To that end he applied himself to the study very seriously - in that he was assisted by his colleague Mr. Bates of UCD (who died only recently).

PHILIP GERARD GORMLEY - THE MATHEMATICIAN

DEATH OF PROFESSOR P. G. GORMLEY

CO. DERRY MAN WHO WAS AMONG EUROPE'S TOP MATHEMATICIANS

A Co. Derryman who was one of Europe's most brilliant and respected mathematicians, **Professor Philip Gerard Gormley**, died yesterday in Claremont Street Hospital, Belfast.

Holder of the Chair in Mathematics at University College, Dublin, **Professor Gormley**, who was in his 61st year, was a member of a prominent and highly- respected Co. Derry family. He was the eldest son of the late Mr. Philip and the late Mrs. Mary Gormley, of Carnanbane, and he received his early schooling at Kilgort Primary School.

His death deprives the world of science of a scholar of world-wide renown.

Professor Gormley's brilliance was early noted and he secured one of the small number of scholarships then available at St. Columb's College. At the College he was the most brilliant student of his time, securing Exhibitions in both junior and senior grades. He won first place in Northern Ireland in mathematics. He was pre-eminent even among many outstanding pupils at

the college in the early days of the presidency of Most Rev. Dr. Farren, Bishop of Derry.

He completed his studies at the college at the age of 16 and passed on to U.C.D. where he continued to attain academic distinction. He gained his B.A. degree with first-class honours and then his M.A. when only 19 years of age.

Next he went to Edinburgh, where he obtained his Ph.D. degree at 22 years of age. His outstanding talents were by then widely recognised and he had offers from several universities to join their staffs, including Edinburgh. But he declined them all and decided to return to Ireland.

At U.C.D. he accepted an assistant lectureship, later becoming a senior lecturer, and eventually was appointed to the Chair of Mathematics, again at a uniquely early age. For over thirty years he was regarded as an educationalist and scientist of world-wide repute.

Professor Gormley was also an extraordinarily gifted linguist, speaking Russian, German, Swedish, Polish, Bulgarian, and

Latvian fluently and having a good working knowledge of Italian, French, Spanish, Irish, and Latin. In addition he translated several Russian mathematics text-books for use by students in many parts of the world.

He was a first-class musician and had a particular love for the violin, at which he was most accomplished.

Despite his unique accomplishments, he was noted for his great understanding and consideration for everyone with whom he came in contact. His death will evoke genuine and widespread sorrow not only throughout his native country but on a European scale.

He is survived by three brothers, all well-known in the political and commercial life of the community, **Messrs. Thomas Gormley, M.P., Patrick J. Gormley, Co. C., and ex-Nationalist M.P., and George Gormley, Drumquin**, and two sisters, Mrs. Angela Deeney, Carnanbane, and Mrs. Katie McSorley, Omagh, to whom the sympathy of a wide circle of friends will be offered.

A BRILLIANT MATHEMATICIAN

It is with extreme pleasure that we put on record today the phenomenal success story of a young County Derry man, Dr. Philip Gormley, son of Mr. Philip Gormley, Carnanbane, Claudy, who has crowned a career of unprecedented achievements by receiving a few days ago his Doctorate PH.D. in Mathematical Science at Edinburgh University. Such a distinction in mathematics is a rarity. It is within the reach of but a few even of the most gifted in that science. To attain it there are needed, not what is commonly understood as talent, but that undefinable something, positive genius, those flashes of intuition, that power of imagination, which in this subject as in the arts, in music and painting, distinguish the master from the accomplished craftsman. That Dr. Gormley is such a master has been proved beyond gainsaying. Dr. Gormley was a pupil at the school of Mr. James McLaughlin, Kilgort, before entering St. Columb's College some ten years ago. **DERRY JOURNAL   7th JULY, 1933**