

## David A. Tipple, 1942-2022

MICHAEL MACKEY AND MARIA MEEHAN

David Tipple was born on 7 December 1942 in Manchester, the only child of John and Mary Tipple. His father was a highly skilled craftsman who worked as a tool-room turner. David was always proud of his working-class roots. For his secondary education he attended Xaverian College, a Catholic grammar school in Manchester. A keen musician, with a special interest in classical music, he played the oboe in Manchester Youth Orchestra. He went on to the University of Manchester, where he obtained a BSc and an MSc in Mathematics.

On completion of his master's degree, David secured a position as lecturer at University College Dublin (UCD) and moved there in 1967. As a young lecturer, he worked on his PhD, which was awarded in 1972 from the University of Manchester under the supervision of Professor Michael Barratt. (cf. *A note on the metastable homotopy groups of torsion spheres*. Bull. London Math. Soc. 3 (1971), 303–306.)

David joined UCD at a time of expansion and growth. The university was moving from the city centre to the Belfield campus which was still a sprawling woodland. David and a close-knit group of colleagues kept logs of the birds they spotted on their lunchtime walks and this catalogue is now archived in UCD library. David's office reflected his own neatness and organisation. He would never leave in the evening without first filing or disposing of each piece of paper and applying a dust cover to each piece of equipment. Computers and computing were a great interest of his and he was an enthusiastic early adopter of Gnu/Linux and an advocate for the value of programming skills to mathematics students. David played a prominent role in the introduction of the Honours BA in Mathematical Studies to UCD. David felt a three year honours offering was required and he was instrumental in the design and delivery of the new programme, which included components in symbolic computation (Maple) as well as traditional programming skills (Pascal).

David meticulously prepared all his lectures and his courses were highly organised. Students held him in high regard and he generously gave of his time to any student who appeared at his office door, which was always open. He also contributed to student life through his long term role as senior treasurer to UCD Dramsoc.

David was an active member of the Irish Mathematical Society and an officer of the society for four years from 1990 to 1993 when he served as treasurer. His penchant for detail and organisation were a great advantage in the role. The physical records from that period are systematically sorted in manilla folders, the titles carefully inked in David's neat hand. (He refused to write on paper with anything but a fountain pen.) An indicator of his methods is that, if there were no invoices or membership applications for a given period, David would nevertheless create the appropriate file with no contents. A significant contribution by David from this period was the redrafting of the IMS constitution, undertaken in collaboration with his UCD colleague Mícheál Ó Searcóid. The original IMS constitution from 1976 consisted of just nine articles and nine rules,

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*Key words and phrases.* Tipple, Obituary.

Received on 15-12-2022.

DOI:10.33232/BIMS.0090.13.15.



FIGURE 1. David Tipple (Photograph: M. Mackey)

but as the society grew, it was apparent that extension and refinement were required. For example, the term limits on membership of the committee were introduced with this revision. Mícheál credits David for the succinctness and precision of language of the resulting articles and the constitution has not changed substantially since. The society's current system of conference funding, with application made via the treasurer, also seems to have started during David's term in the role.

David was a popular, affable and much appreciated colleague in the UCD Department of Mathematics. He was particularly helpful to new and younger members of staff (as the authors can attest) and was always happy to share his knowledge of many topics outside mathematics, the state of the Lancashire cricket team being a particular favourite.

After his retirement in 2006, David pursued his interests with his usual vigour. An avid reader, with an interest in the history of typography and printing, he volunteered at Project Gutenberg. He was particularly proud of a collaboration with his friend, and professor of linguistics, Kevin Cathcart. They worked together on *The Book of the Twelve Prophets*, vol. II, by George Adam Smith which had more than 1,500 footnotes, many in Greek and Hebrew, with David ensuring the fonts were faithfully reproduced.

In 1975 David had met Fíona, a librarian newly arrived to UCD. They married in 1976 and enjoyed a further 46 happy years together. They both loved the Irish countryside and regularly holidayed there. David's fondness for Ireland was apparent when he became an Irish citizen in 2005.

David passed away following a short illness on June 5th 2022 and is survived by Fíona.

(A version of this article has appeared in the London Mathematical Society Newsletter.)

**Michael Mackey** studied and began lecturing mathematics at University College Dublin some time in the twentieth century. His interests include Jordan Banach triples and Boxer twins.

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