

Denis Cosgrove, St Catherine's College, Oxford, Geography 1966-1969

Denis entered academic life at St. Catherine's College, Oxford in October 1966. To his fellow geography undergraduates he was immediately an interesting, even exotic, character. Liverpool was at the height of its fame as the home of the "Mersey sound", the Beatles, and – significantly for Denis – currently active poets like Adrian Henri, Roger McGough and Brian Patten. This did no harm to Denis's image as a sharp-talking street-wise Liverpudlian, proud of his Irish ancestry, fresh from selling programmes at Goodison Park during England's glorious 1966 football World Cup, happy to lead his mates in Liverpool and Irish songs in Oxford's student pubs. But there was another side to Denis – the Jesuit-trained intellectual, sceptical, sharply analytical, and rigorous in debate. These strengths, that had earned him a scholarship on entering Oxford, shone through quickly and clearly. Usually gregarious, he was also prone to introspection, and at intervals needed to withdraw into his private space. From the outset he was a human geographer with strong interests in artistic and cultural matters. Significantly he chose ethnology as a first-year option. Over his three undergraduate years he was the intellectual star in the ongoing informal debate among the St. Catherine's geographers. When he left to take up a junior research and teaching post in Toronto in 1969 it was already clear he was heading for a career of academic distinction.

St Catherine's College, Oxford

- Lester Hicks, Geography 1966-1969
  - Mike Walker, Geography 1966-1969
  - John Cross, Geography 1966-1969
- and
- David L Hills, Physics 1965-1968
  - Richard O Smith, Forestry 1964-1969