Brian Beeston

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What and when did you study at Cambridge?
I matriculated in 1958 and studied Natural Sciences at Selwyn College. I was interested in metallurgy and studied it for Part II.

What did you do after graduating and how did this lead into your career?
I didn’t know what I wanted to do after graduation. I’d spoken to the head of the metallurgy department at the University of Pennsylvania when he’d visited Cambridge in my final year, and he suggested I apply to Penn for a Masters in Materials Science. In my last year at Penn, the head of Materials Science at the University of Birmingham visited and, similarly, I went back to England to get my PhD researching the defect structure of Nickel alloys using electron microscopy.

My first job was with the company AEI, who manufactured the electron microscopes where I worked in technical marketing. I later worked in technical marketing in the semiconductor manufacturing equipment industry for Applied Materials, which brought me to Santa Clara and eventually to San Diego.

What is your favourite Cambridge memory?
The sports I played. I was a good kicker (Golden Boots Beeston!) on the Selwyn College Rugby Team and I played cricket, too. I rowed in the May bumps in 1961 (and got Blades!). Brian later founded the Penn Rugby Club, which still exists today.

What advice do you have for current students or recent graduates?
“A technical PhD and an English accent give you tremendous kudos in the US!”
“Take advantage of the opportunities presented. Put yourself out there and network”

Brian is the President of the Cambridge Alumni Society in San Diego. The group has 350 members, from recent graduates to retired alumni. There is no membership fee to join the group and it hosts about 10 events each year, from trips to Shakespeare at the Old Globe, to soirees and networking evenings, talks, and quiz nights (vs. Oxford!). Get in touch with Brian to join the group.

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