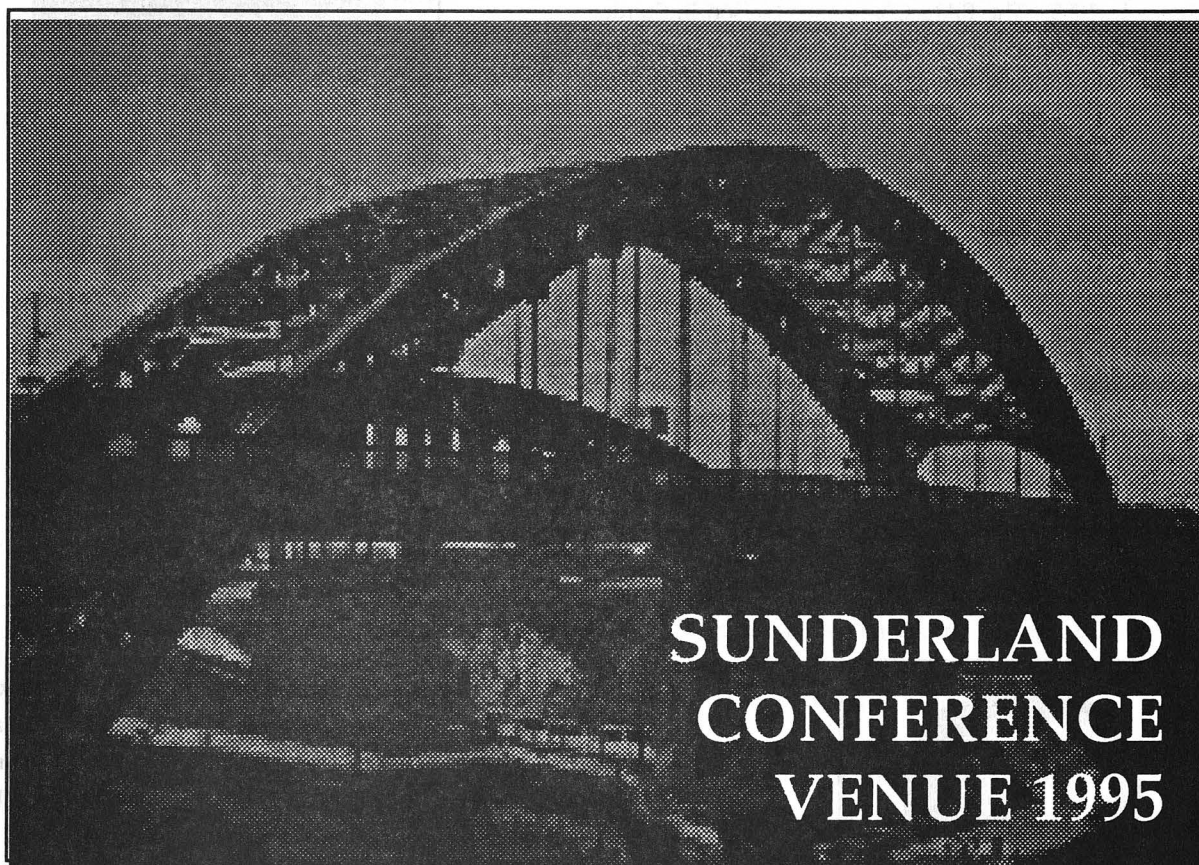


British Association for Irish Studies

Newsletter

Issue No 6 Winter 1994



**SUNDERLAND
CONFERENCE
VENUE 1995**

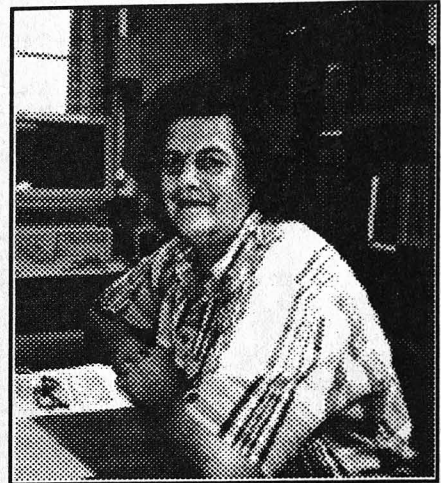
In this issue

- **BAIS Biennial Conference**
- **BAIS Famine Publication Initiative**
- **Council Officers' Reports**
- **The Irish Language 1994**
- **News, Views and Reviews**

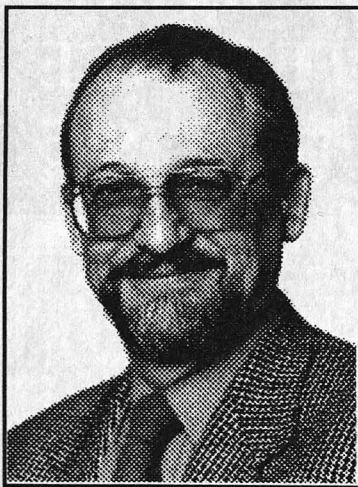
BAIS Biennial Conference University of Sunderland

The 1995 BAIS Biennial Conference, titled 'Representing Ireland/ Re-presenting Ireland', will be held at the University of Sunderland on **Friday 8th to Sunday 10th September 1995**. The last northern venue for a BAIS conference was Liverpool in 1988, so it was timely and appropriate for the Council to accept Sunderland's offer to host the Conference in 1995. The BAIS Conference Liaison in Sunderland, Professor Tony Hepburn, pointed out to me that 'the north-east of England is historically one of the largest centres of Irish settlement in Britain and the Conference provides a welcome chance to raise the profile of Irish studies in the region'.

A call for contributions went out to BAIS members in November and Eleanor Burgess, Conference Convenor, reports that the initial response shows an encouraging range and growing number of proposals. In the task of selecting papers and other kinds of contribution, Eleanor will be consulting with specialists within the BAIS Council in the three main disciplinary 'strands' of Literary/Cultural Studies, Historical Studies and Social Studies. She reported to me recently that papers and ideas for seminar topics or workshops are still welcome, particularly in Social Studies strand.



Eleanor Burgess



Tony Hepburn

So make a New Year's resolution and send in your ideas as soon as possible! The Conference standing committee will draw up a suitable structure, set up a finance system and budget the costs in time for the next meeting of Council in February. Members will be advised of the conference fees in the Spring. Remember that being away from the expensive south-east has its advantages! A provisional programme will be printed in *Newsletter 7* in July.

The Editor

**For further details contact the BAIS Conference Convenor:
Eleanor Burgess, Mulberries, Boreham, Chelmsford, Essex, CM3 3DS
Tel: 0245-467287**

See '1995 Conference Venue' on page 10 for more information.

Notes on Contributors

Eleanor Burgess

is the BAIS Conference Convenor.

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holds a British Academy Scholarship for research in the Drama Department at the University of Birmingham.

She took a First in Irish Studies and Drama from St Mary's University College.

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Dr Tom Dooley

is a Senior Lecturer in Business Studies at Ealing Tertiary College and the Treasurer of BAIS.

Jo Halpin

holds a Research Studentship at De Montfort University (Bedford College) for work in women's sports history.

She took a First in Irish Studies and Sports Science from St Mary's University College.

A C Hepburn

is Professor of Modern Irish History at the University of Sunderland.

Seán Hutton

is Community Care Development Co-Ordinator at the Federation of Irish Societies, writes a regular column as Gaeilge for *The Irish Post* and is Chair of BAIS.

Dr Jim McAuley

is a Senior Lecturer in Sociology at the University of Huddersfield and BAIS Secretary.

Morag Morris

teaches Twentieth Century poetry at Guildford School of Acting and the University of Surrey. She instigated the Annual Poetry Lecture series at the University.

Julie Nugent

is a doctoral research student and Lecturer in the Cultural Studies Department at the University of Birmingham.

Jim O'Hara

is a Principal Lecturer and Director of the Centre for Irish Studies at St Mary's University College, Strawberry Hill.

Dr Lance Pettitt

is a Lecturer in Irish Studies at St. Mary's University College, Strawberry Hill.

Joe Sheeran

Lectures at Carlton-Bolling College, Bradford, and Provincial Co-Ordinator of Cúlra, Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann, Cúige Breataine.

Kate Thompson

is an Irish language teacher and convenor of the BAIS Standing Committee on Language and Culture.

John Woodhurst

is a Lecturer at Newark and Sherwood College, Nottingham and convenor of the BAIS Standing Committee on Education.

The British Association for Irish Studies Newsletter exists to provide a voice for, communication between and information to the membership. Apart from Reports by the Officers of the Association, the views expressed in the Newsletter are not necessarily those of the British Association for Studies.

The Association is a registered charity: No. 298192

Editor's Introduction

I hope that all of you are enjoying a welcome holiday period over Christmas and that this *Newsletter* will brighten up the dark winter days as you read it. At the time of writing it is almost twelve months exactly that the Downing Street Declaration was made by Reynolds and Major. I share Seán Hutton's hopes that the political developments of the coming year prove to be even more positive and constructive.

What does 1995 bring for BAIS? Well, the main features include the Biennial Conference and publication of the Famine Pack and the Travelling Exhibition. The BAIS continues to assist the Soar Valley Conference and initiatives in the Irish language. I would ask you to participate in BAIS-related events and offer your assistance to work on the sub-committees of the Council. Madeleine Casey, a postgraduate student at the University of Birmingham will be Co-editor for *Newsletter 7* to share the growing work load with me.

I would like to express my thanks to Ian Mitchell for all his help in designing the layout for this issue and the staff of the Media Production Unit at St Mary's for their advice and assistance. Thanks should also go to Sarah Briggs for her co-operation at *Irish Studies Review* and to the other officers on the BAIS Council for their help and encouragement. Most of all I would like to acknowledge the effort and time taken by contributors in getting articles, items and reviews to me. The quality of the *Newsletter* relies on your writing skills and conscientiousness in sending in material.

I will be glad to receive reports of meetings, conferences and cultural events from any individual members, not necessarily attached to institutions. I have also tried to include more photos to improve the look of the *Newsletter*. Try to keep items to about 500 words (roughly one side of A4, typed). If you have the facilities, material can be sent by fax and items on computer disc (Word for Windows or compatible formats) speed up the production process. For pictures, black and white photo prints scan best. Discs and photos will be returned of course. The long book review in this issue is a one-off because Hurst & Co sent it in. We would prefer to leave book reviews to *ISR*, but will continue to review pamphlets, reports and



occasional papers in order to bring them to wider attention.

We carry publicity and adverts for university conferences and summer schools. As from *Newsletter 7* (July), we will give preference for advertising space to institutions, associations and businesses who are members of the BAIS. If you wish to place adverts for conferences, etc. you can join BAIS at the institutional rate (currently £40) in exchange for a half-page, display advertisement. As an Institutional Member of BAIS you will receive two copies of each *ISR* and *Newsletter* issue. The *Newsletter* reaches upwards of 300 people with professional and individual interests in a wide-range of Irish Studies activities. It would help us if you mentioned the *Newsletter* when making enquiries with institutions featured here.

Best wishes for the New Year.

Lance Pettitt

Deadline to receive material for *Newsletter 7*
is 1st May 1995 to go out with *ISR 10* in early July



Chair's Report



Once again, I would like to thank Lance Pettitt on behalf of the Council and membership, for his work in producing and developing the *BAIS Newsletter* as a vehicle for communication with the membership. It is also appropriate to congratulate, and thank, the editorial team of *Irish Studies Review*, who now provide BAIS with a first class publication for distribution four times a year.

Tom Dooley has continued to make a major contribution in managing the financial affairs of the Association and in developing the system of financial controls. We are very happy to acknowledge the receipt of the grant from the government of the Republic of Ireland referred to in his Report and also grateful for the assistance we have received in recent times from the Irish Ambassador in London and from members of his staff. We also have to acknowledge the receipt of EU funding, under the LINGUA programme; as well as start-up sponsorship from the *Irish Post* for the Famine publication project.

John Woodhurst deserves our thanks for developing an effective and model system of consultation for the Education Committee, for his continuing work on

developing an education strategy for the Association, and for his development of, and securing of start-up funding for, the attractive and timely Famine project.

Eleanor Burgess has begun preparatory work towards the 1995 BAIS Biennial Irish Studies Conference. Through Eleanor's efforts, and with the assistance of Council, we now have an improved conference structure, an attractive and encompassing conference title, and a suitable location at the University of Sunderland which meets the strategic needs of the Association.

The Irish Language Committee continues its teacher support programme, and Kate Thompson recently organised a highly successful 'Language and Culture' weekend in Coventry with the participation of leading Irish language teachers and writers.

Val Smith has now completed the revision and computerisation of the membership records. We hope that a result of her work will be an improved service to members in the future.

The reports of individual Officers and Convenors of Standing Committees will tell you in more detail about some aspects of this work. In addition, Council has also set a timetable for the development of the decentralised structure which meets the new circumstances of the Association. We will also review the working of the Standing Committee system, to consider what improvements are required. There are also a number of new initiatives in the pipeline, which we will announce in due course.

As you are aware, the day-to-day running of the Association, and the development of specific aspects of its work, are carried out by volunteers - largely, at the moment, by those who volunteered by standing for election to Council. As explained by Tom Dooley the revised BAIS Constitution was drawn up with a view to encouraging participation, and we will be very glad to hear from members who would like to make a defined commitment to assist in a particular sphere of the Association's activity.

(Continued on Page 4)

Secretary's Report

Since the restructuring of the Association many of the day to day queries have fallen on myself. This has meant a varied range of issues have been raised. So, for example I have recently registered the BAIS with 'The Irish Worldwide Project' on their 'Directory of Worldwide Associations'. I have also prepared an electronic mail (E-Mail) advertisement for the BAIS to be posted on 'notice boards' which can be accessed from anywhere in the world, with potential access of 35 million people!

In recent weeks, however, most of my thoughts have been on membership. One reason is that I have spent a lot of time preparing a draft copy of the questionnaire for the 'Fourth Survey of Irish Studies in Britain', which, if all goes well will be distributed early in 1995.

Clearly underlying much of this is the need for an urgent review of the state of Irish Studies and more information on the membership of the BAIS which now appears to be reasonably constant at around 280. From the information we do have it is possible to pick up on some basic trends (well I am a sociologist!). BAIS membership remains concentrated in London and in those working in

institutions of higher education. There are, however, other concentrations of members, geographically, in the Midlands and in employment terms, those teaching in Colleges. There are also a large number of individuals who are not affiliated to any educational establishment and on whom we have little information.

If the BAIS is to respond properly to membership needs and to fully utilise the resources of its membership, we need as much information as possible. I would therefore urge all members to respond to the questionnaire as soon as you receive it.

Finally, (and far be it for me to sound like Tony Blair) if each existing member signed up just one new member in the next year, then...

Jim McAuley

NB. The Council meeting of November 1994 decided to hold the AGM on the weekend of the BAIS Conference (8-10th September 1995).

Chair's report (Continued from Page 3)

As Executive Director of BAIS, I was the organiser of a series of cross community history conferences in Northern Ireland, which took place between 1989 and 1992. This activity brought me into contact with those who were seeking to bring about a greater understanding of the differing cultural traditions in Northern Ireland; and, subsequently, with the Cultures of Ireland initiative, the object of which was to encourage the debate on cultural pluralism throughout the island of Ireland. It is therefore

a great pleasure to welcome the initiation of a political process which (at the time of writing) creates the possibility of progress towards a lasting peace in Ireland. This will clearly be a challenging and difficult process, but it represents a singular opportunity to address issues which affect all the peoples of the two states in these islands, not least the Irish community in Britain. We can, therefore, only hope for a successful outcome and wish the process well.

Seán Hutton

(Continued on Page 4)

The Treasurer's Report

Although audited accounts are presented at Annual General Meetings, to which all BAIS members are invited, it is the council's view that members should be kept informed of the Association's financial status.

Income

Without the £20,191 Irish government grant, and the £975 given by the Irish Embassy's Cultural Relations Committee to help finance our 1993 conference, BAIS would be in a critical position. The council is therefore extremely grateful to the Irish Government and Embassy for their support.

The healthy state of the Irish language account is due to Kate Thompson's efforts in obtaining a Lingua grant from the European Union. However, the bulk of this cash will be used to finance the October 1994 Irish language conference.

In recognition of the Association's registered charity status, the AIB Bank branches with which we have accounts have agreed to waive future bank charges and have also refunded some of the charges already incurred. This gesture is much appreciated.

Closure of the Association's central office released money tied up as a deposit and also generated some income through the sale of office equipment and furniture.

The revenue produced by membership subscriptions does not even cover the cost of the *Irish Studies Review*. One reason is the large number of unwaged members. Their subscription is currently £7.50, but the basic service of providing the *Irish Studies Review* and the *BAIS Newsletter*, costs around £12 per member. The Association is unable to sustain such costs and the council has agreed to raise unwaged membership subscriptions to £12, waged to £20 and add a £2 supplement to all overseas subscription rates to help cover postage as from January 1995. Although members are urged to pay their subscriptions by bank order, some existing standing orders have not been revised to take account of increased subscription rates. A few members are currently paying £14 instead of £18 and they should amend their bank orders to £20 for 1995.

Two major projects, the publication of an education package to commemorate the famine, and the 1995 conference, are planned as income-generating activities. But successful fund-raising is the key to the Association's future survival.

Expenditure

The council has implemented a rigorous cost-cutting policy. The central office has been closed, so rent charges have now been eliminated. Other overheads, such as electricity, have also been eliminated or reduced, although the large telephone bill is partly due to the cost of diverting calls made to the central office.

The considerable cost of room hire for council meetings, at £44 per time, resulted from the need to settle a backlog of invoices. Alternative free accommodation has now been located, and room hire is unlikely to appear as an item of cost in future.

Travel expenses relate to journeys by council officers on official business, such as attendance at council meetings in London. This has been reduced as far as possible. No fare claims exceeding the cost of an APEX ticket will be refunded, for example. And refreshment and hospitality payments are no longer claimable.

The future

The Association's credit balance looks healthy. But this is a short-term perspective. We are only half-way through the financial year and have commitments to meet. The old executive agreed to a grant of £500 for the 1994 Soar Valley Conference, for instance. And a request for a similar grant for the 1995 conference will probably have to be considered.

However, if BAIS is to fulfil its purpose and also to survive, the council must manage its financial resources very carefully. In the medium to long term, with no immediate prospects of further funding, the Association's credit balance is meagre indeed. BAIS will need to consider any requests for financial assistance closely. It may be that the council should agree to provide such assistance only in those instances where no alternative sources of

funding exist.

There is a need for entrepreneurial flair. But this involves risks. From the educational, income-generating and profile-raising perspective, John Woodhurst's and the education committee's famine project has exciting potential. Despite John's excellent fund-raising efforts, the project requires an initial outlay of £1,000 from BAIS funds, with the probable need for further short-term



funding. Similarly, the 1995 conference will require a relatively considerable initial outlay. In both instances, however, the council, confident of their success, have fully-backed the projects.

Ultimately, however, BAIS must find alternative sources of funding. In its efforts to do so, the council will welcome any help or suggestions from its members and friends.

Tom Dooley - Treasurer

FINANCIAL STATEMENT FOR THE PERIOD 1 APRIL TO 31 OCTOBER 1994

INCOME	£
Current Account, AIB	47
Deposit Account, AIB	2880
Conference Account 1993, AIB	108
Petty Cash Account, AIB	8
Irish Language Account, Lloyds	4000
Membership Subscriptions	1300
Grants	21166
Sales	130
Office Deposit Fund	333
AIB Bank Charges Refund	309
TOTAL	£30,281

EXPENDITURE	£
Irish Studies Review	3210
BAIS Newsletter	400
Room Hire	388
Office rent	394
Electricity	8
Telephone/Fax	362
Postage	55
Stationary	13
Photocopying	19
Travel Expenses	750
Refreshment/Hospitality	123
Account & Audit Charges	259
Conference 1995 Expenses	55
Sundries	109
Soar Valley Conference	500
Bank Charges	15
Accounting & Audit Charges	259
Irish Language Conference	2524
TOTAL	£9,443

CREDIT BALANCE £20,836

The BAIS Committee Structure

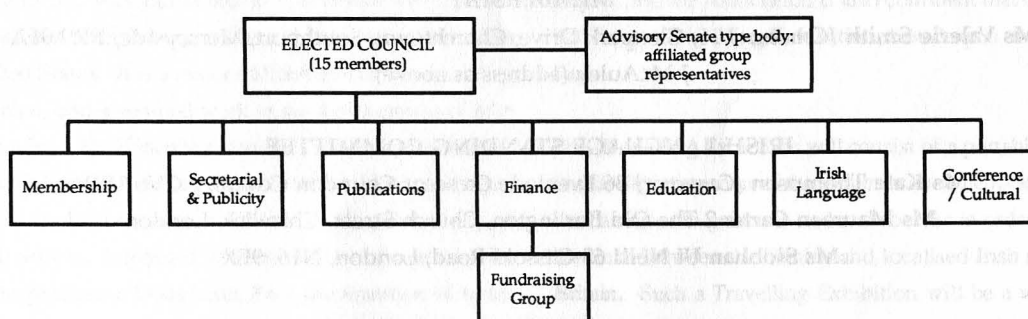
As illustrated in the diagram below, the new BAIS organisational structure relies heavily on a system of standing committees. This system is a method for distributing the workload following the redundancy of permanent staff and closure of the central office.

Committees also represent the several points of contact for conducting BAIS business. Members therefore need to know their way around the committee structure, and it is hoped that a printed copy of the Association's constitution and standing orders, which state the function and responsibilities of each committee, will soon be available for existing and new members.

Their function is the:

- conduct of routine, day-to-day business and administration in their area of responsibility
- formulation of policy relevant to their area of interest
- presentation of detailed written and/or oral reports to the council recommending policy decisions

All council members, and the few existing co-opted non-council members, do the work in their spare time. But they generally have other demands and full-time jobs, and this makes it important:



The committees are therefore largely autonomous in their method of working and are intended to be the council's workhorses. They do the detailed planning tasks. The council, coming together four to six times a year, adopts or rejects their recommendations, asks for clarification or for further information, or instructs that the recommended policies be modified. All council members are required to be a member of one or more committees.

However, committee workload can be very heavy. The detailed day-to-day administration work of the finance, membership and secretarial and publicity committees can be onerous. And the publications, education, Irish language and conference/cultural committees are frequently engaged in demanding projects which have to be completed to fixed deadlines.

These specialist committees are staffed by council members and co-opted non-council members. The constitution adopted in 1993 allows existing committees to be dissolved or merged and new ones to be created as necessary.

- for members of a committee to share the work load fairly
- to attract co-opted, non-council members and thus spread the workload

If any committee fails to function effectively, the work of other committees, and of the BAIS, is adversely affected, sometimes badly.

The committee system is further complicated because members are dispersed across the country. This makes communication and co-ordination difficult.

However, much satisfaction can be gained from committee work. Committees develop policies and can influence the direction taken by BAIS. They are crucial to the future success of BAIS. If you think you can contribute to committee work in any of the specialist areas identified and would like to be co-opted, please contact Chairman Seán Hutton, at the address shown overleaf.

Tom Dooley

BAIS Council and Standing Committee Members

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MEMBERSHIP

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J McAuley (address as above)

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Ms Kate Thompson (*Convenor*) 36 Evenlode Crescent Coundon Coventry CV6 1BP
Ms Maureen Carter 2 The Old Burlington, Church Street, Chiswick, London
Ms Siobhan Ui Neill 63 Clissold Road, London, N16 9EX

EDUCATION STANDING COMMITTEE

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Dr Mervyn Busted Department of Geography, University of Manchester

Mr Nessian Danaher Soar Valley College, Gleneagles Ave., Leicester, LE4 7GY;

Dr Christine Kinealy University of Liverpool.

CONFERENCE AND CULTURAL COMMITTEE

Ms Eleanor Burgess (*Convenor*) Mulberries, Boreham, Chelmsford, Essex CM3 3DS

Prof Tony Hepburn (*Liaison*) University of Sunderland

Dr Paul Stewart Business School, College of Cardiff, University of Wales, Cardiff

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BAIS Famine Documents Pack and Travelling Exhibition

1995 marks the 150th anniversary of the Great Famine, and this will be commemorated by a number of events around the country. It is the intention of the BAIS to be at the forefront of these developments, and to this end the Education Standing Committee of the Association has been extremely fortunate in persuading Dr Christine Kinealy to assemble a **Facsimile Documents Pack** on the Famine, for publication in September 1995.

Dr Kinealy's recent book, *This Great Calamity: The Irish Famine 1845-52*, was published in November 1994 in this country, and has received unprecedented pre-publication orders in the United States. It is a major addition to our understanding of the Famine, and a seminal work in the development of Irish historiography. Dr Kinealy's qualities of proven academic excellence (a former Assistant Director of the Ulster Historical Foundation in Belfast, and a Fellow of the University of Liverpool) will be combined with her ability to reach a wide audience to produce a Documents Pack the intention of which will partly be to appeal to a wide educational/academic market. However, its main aim will be a reaching out to the Irish diaspora, particularly the Irish in Britain. In style and content the Pack should prove to be the commemorative pack to buy. Not only will it be written by the historian of the Famine but will prove real value for money when compared with comparable facsimile packs, e.g. from the National Library of Ireland.

The Pack will consist of five sections (Introduction/Pre-Famine; the Famine itself; Post Famine; Historians/Historiography; and Conclusions, including Further Reading). In addition to a total of 25 documents with associated texts, there will be sections on 'Discussion Points' and 'Suggestions for Further Study'. These will be broad enough to appeal not only to the general reader but also Adult Education Irish Studies classes, schools and colleges, and first year undergraduate level. There will also be a brief and unobtrusive cross-referencing (where appropriate) to Key Stages and Attainment Targets in relevant subjects in the National Curriculum.

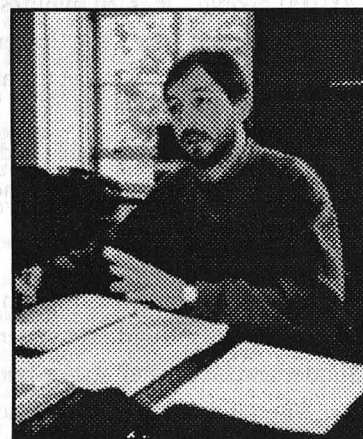
The section on Historians/Historiography should prove particularly fascinating with illustrative extracts from the work of ten historians of the Famine (including Mitchel, O'Brien,

Woodham-Smith, Foster, O Grada and Kinealy herself), along with an introduction and commentary outlining Nationalist, Revisionist, Econometric and Post-Revisionist interpretations of the Famine.

In producing such a Pack the Association will achieve the expressed wish of Brendan Mac Lua in *The Irish Post* recently that 'the Irish Studies movement throughout Britain will apply its educational resources to a broad appreciation of what happened and why'. Indeed *The Irish Post* is part-funding the project, and the Association is also confident that other sources will fund a **Travelling Exhibition**, based upon the Documents Pack.

This Travelling Exhibition will consist of a portable set of large boards depicting some of the facsimile documents and associated text, along with guidance on local sources in order to draw out the links between the Famine and localised Irish settlement in Britain. Such a Travelling Exhibition will be a vital resource around the country in areas where Famine Commemorative Committees have been formed; from Irish Studies Groups, libraries, and those institutions of Higher Education offering Irish Studies courses.

Thus through the Documents Pack and the Travelling Exhibition descendants of that widespread diaspora created by the Famine will be able to interpret and understand afresh a period which has remained rooted in the Irish psyche.

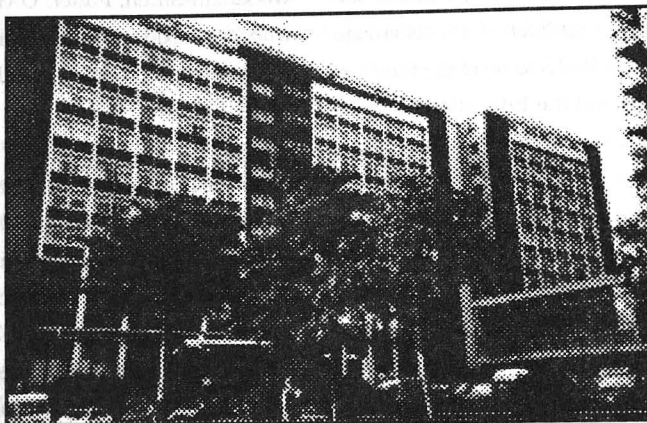


Further details of the Documents Pack and Travelling Exhibition will be made available in the next issue of the Newsletter.

John Woodhurst

BAIS Biennial Conference 1995

University of Sunderland



Wearmouth Hall, University of Sunderland

NORTHUMBRIA: MEETING PLACE OF CELTIC AND ENGLISH CULTURES

Sunderland and its University will host the 1995 BAIS Conference. Historically it was at the border between Celtic and English cultures, but now Sunderland provides a pocket of Japanese culture in the form of the Nissan car plant that has taken over from shipbuilding as one of the major industrial employers in the area. Sunderland officially became a city 1992 and has a population of 300,000 people. It is 20 minutes by shuttle train from Newcastle upon Tyne. The University itself dates back to founder colleges in 1860, but the historic site of St Peter's, a 7th century monastery close to the river Wear, is associated with the Venerable Bede, often considered the first English historian. Today the University has some 8,000 students on campus.

The conference venue, Wearmouth Hall (above), is located on the Chester Road, some ten minutes walk from Sunderland British Rail station but well served with buses too. The Hall features accommodation (single study-bedrooms with shared facilities are typical), main conference hall (with a 250 capacity and theatre stage), attractive bar, disabled access and modern cafeteria/dining facilities. Being all under one roof it promises to be a closely-knit conference weekend.

Terry McDermott, Chair of the Tyneside Irish Society informed me that the society is one of the largest in the country with nearly 3000 members. He welcomed news of the Conference and has met with Tony Hepburn, BAIS Liaison for the Conference. Tony Corcoran is currently the Director of the Tyneside Irish Festival - a two week event featuring music, drama, dance and poetry - which is run annually in October. From these contacts, the BAIS organisers hope to encourage local participation and utilise the talents of music and drama groups as well as academics from the region in the conference programme.

Help to make the 1995 Conference a stimulating, enjoyable and successful meeting of ideas in September by offering your expertise and participating in one of this Association's main events.

For delegates arriving by car: approaching from the south take the A1(M) to Durham, then the A690/A19 to Sunderland. From the north take the A1 around Newcastle, pick up A19, then get off on the A690.

Flights arrive at Newcastle International Airport. Take the Metro into the city and then take the BR shuttle train to Sunderland.

The Editor

The Irish Language 1994

Oideas Gael in Donegal

1994 was a busy and rewarding year for Irish language activities. A grant from 'Lingua' again enabled twelve Irish language teachers from Britain to attend an in-service course in Co. Donegal. The course was organised by Liam ó Cuinneagáin of 'Oideas Gael' and all participants profited from the expert tuition in an Irish-speaking region.



The BAIS Lingua group in Donegal

Language and Culture Conference

A second 'Language and Culture' conference was held in Coventry over the weekend of 15-16th October. An audience of about seventy heard talks by eminent Irish poets and writers including Aan Titley of St Patrick's College, Drumcondra, the Donegal poet Cathal ó Searcaigh and the writer/broadcaster, Séamus MacAnnaidh. Workshops by Dr. Emrys Evans and Dr. Robby Mulally (Edinburgh University)) gave an insight into Scottish Gaelic and Celtic themes. Set dancing and music added to the weekend's programme of events and all present enjoyed the opportunity of speaking and listening to Irish in a pleasant, relaxed atmosphere.

A Newsletter will be published early in 1995, giving details of events to come and reports of the past year's progress.

Kate Thompson

Birmingham University Irish Studies Group

The Group has been initiated with the Cultural Studies Department of Birmingham University as a response to a perceived 'invisibility' in its present agenda. At present, Birmingham has no such arena for (academic) debate and discussion despite the fact that the Irish form the largest ethnic community in the city (some estimate 50% of the population). The Group intends to stimulate and facilitate research into theoretical issues surrounding 'Irishness', as well as developing/strengthening links with local community and non-academic organisations to encourage more 'practical' collaborative projects. Similarly, we are keen to extend 'membership' to other departments within the University and other local/national academic institutions.

Current research includes a contemporary account of the Irish in Birmingham, commodification of ethnicity, cultural transmission and issues pertaining to mental health. Within the Department we are currently developing a third year option in Irish Studies, as well as investigating ways of securing an Irish dimension to other modules. Thus, we are particularly interested in how issues surrounding 'Irish identity(ies)' can challenge, inform and reflect upon existing theories and concepts. For example, constructions of 'race' and 'ethnicity'; ideas of 'nation' and nationalism in relations to current theories of globalisation, gender and sexuality. We are also concerned to interrogate notions of 'English/Britishness', 'whiteness', etc. within the discourse of cultural studies.

Julie Nugent

Scoil Samhraidh Cúlra

In mid-July, having completed Study Days in each of the four regions of the British Province of Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann earlier in the year, some 50 participants converged on Crosby Hall in Liverpool for the next element in the cultural and educational programme which is Cúlra; the theme of which this year is 'Ar dteanga féin' (Our own Language).

Crosby Hall proved to be a superb venue for the Summer School, located off the beaten track and away from the rush of the world, it provided the ideal setting for our purposes: to spend a weekend encountering without too much self-consciousness a language which is our own and not our own. The great majority of those who came to Liverpool were second, third and even more generations removed from Ireland and its 'official language'. But they all had a kind of nostalgia for something they had missed and wished they hadn't. They were curious and open to any suggestion that there was something here that they ought to value and possibly even cultivate.



Cúlra School (L to R): Joe Sheeran, Kate Thompson, Breandán ó Caollaí

That the weekend offered an opportunity to twist the tongue around sounds it was unused to was the point of it all. Travelling over from West Belfast were a quartet of the most relaxed advocates and uninhibited exponents of the teaching art you could wish to meet. Using a methodology which is lifted straight from all our infancies, we were soon exposed to the spectacle of flat-vowelled northerners rendering songs in Irish without apology. Confidence grew to the point where all were equally

engaged in a mad gallop to get the plumb starts in short dramatic sketches, devised by the actors and enacted on the Saturday evening before an audience of peers...as Gaeilge.

Earlier, we had heard of the work of BAIS in promoting Irish language usage as it has been developed by Cait Thompson, our guest speaker.

Sunday saw the more sedate and individual therapy of model-making and artistic representation in the form of a huge banner collectively fashioned with the word 'Cúlra' four square in its middle and shouting its name in a blaze of colour. The models were forged from the kneading and pummeling of the pliant material. Celtic crosses of uncertain symmetry; legends announcing the name in Irish of their creators; twisting knobs and intertwining threads, delicately laced, Kells fashion, and the predictable celebration of 'do theintean féin', against all other hobs.

Later the school was treated to the reflections of James O'Connell as he conducted us around the maze of European cultures and sub-cultures, discussing their shelf-life and showing us at once that we are not as pure as we thought we were.

Language Workshop Leaders: Nóirín úi Chlerigh, Seán Mac Aindreasa, Dónall ó Mearáin, Colm Mac Aindreasa
Art and Pottery Workshop Leaders: Adrienne and Stan Engel

Speakers: Professor James O' Connell and Kate Thompson

Joe Sheeran

Ireland's Opportunity, England's Difficulty!

While flicking through *The Independent* newspaper last summer, I came across a solitary paragraph tucked away on the international page. It simply stated that the Republic of Ireland was due to decriminalise male homosexual sex acts and make the age of consent equal to that of heterosexuals, i.e. 17 years. Equality legislation was also to be passed, affording lesbians and gay men protection against discrimination and attack. Hurrah and ballyhoo, I thought. Crack open the champagne! Not only had the Oireachtas furthered the cause of human rights by recognising and accepting the needs of its lesbians and gay citizens, but the timing of their decision meant that I had a cracking good topic for my final-year Irish Studies dissertation!

A comparative study of homosexual law reform in the Republic of Ireland and the United Kingdom - it raised a few eyebrows among fellow students and some of the academic staff. The answer to "what's your dissertation about, Jo?" illicit responses which ranged from embarrassed silence to "Oh, that's er...um...different". To those curious enough to ask why I'd chosen to investigate a 'gay' issue, I'd reply: "It's an under-researched area and the issue of homosexual law reform is both contemporary and indicative of wider Anglo-Irish relations." Which roughly translated meant: "I get to meet lots of other lesbians and gay men, spend a week visiting all the gay bars and clubs in Dublin!" It's a hard life.

Anyway, having chosen my research methodology, I proceeded to try to uncover the reasons why Irish legislators have been able to afford lesbians and gay men rights which Westminster continues to deny to UK homosexuals. One factor is the existence of a Fianna Fáil-labour coalition government, which adopted much of the Labour Party's progressive social policy and voiced a strong commitment to decriminalisation. The United Kingdom, on the other hand, has had 15 years of continuous Conservative government. Enough said really!

Then there was the powerful triumvirate of President Mary Robinson, Minister for Justice, Maire Geoghegan-

Quinn, and Senator David Norris, who were not only vocal in their support for equality legislation, but were knowledgeable, witty and charming into the bargain. In the red, white and blue corner we had...Edwina Currie!

Dublin's pro-European stance also played a major part in securing reform for the Republic of Ireland, where European Court decisions regarding the legality of their homosexuality laws were used as a catalyst for self-assessment and change. Euro-sceptics at Westminster, however, used similar rulings as sticks with which to beat both homophiles and Europhiles. Royaume Uni nil point!

Law reform in the UK was further hindered by the absence of a unified and convincing lobby group. Whereas Ireland's Gay and Lesbian Equality Network (GLEN) sought and received a mandate from all the homosexual groups it purported to represent, Stonewall - the most prominent lobby group in the UK - did not. This resulted in disaffection among lesbians and gay men who claimed Sir Ian McKellen and that bloke from 'Eastenders' were not representative of them. A coherent argument for reform was therefore not forthcoming.

Another influential factor in both the United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland was the reaction of the media - largely homophobic and unsympathetic in the UK, but more circumspect and open in the Republic. A long history of sexual repression in Ireland has also allowed Irish heterosexuals to identify more readily with the discrimination faced by lesbians and gay men, and there is a school of thought which suggests homosexual law reform is just another part of the de-colonisation process.

All these factors (and doubtless many more) have helped the Republic of Ireland move towards a more egalitarian stance on sexual matters, and although it is far from being a homosexual Utopia, the Republic is beginning to relax and enjoy its sexual plurality. The UK please take note!

Jo Halpin

Irish Studies Adult Courses in Britain

NEWARK & SHERWOOD COLLEGE IRISH STUDIES

This Autumn term saw the fifth year of this popular ten-week evening course in Irish Studies. Newark is a market town of some 25,000 people situated in Nottinghamshire, half way between Nottingham and Lincoln. Its position on the River Trent crossing of the old Roman Fosseway and the Great North Road made it an ancient stopping off point for travellers and migrants, including of course the Irish. From the late 18th century many seasonal migrants came from Mayo and Donegal to work in the fields of Lincolnshire, and with the development of railways and the brewing and malting industries in Newark in the 19th century, more permanent settlement developed. In more recent times recruitment of migrant labour by British Sugar and the building of power stations along the Trent Valley led to a further Irish influx. Today Newark's Irish population is represented in many trades and professions, and (including first and second generation Irish) constitutes around 5% of the population.



Pictured above are members of the class with the organising tutor, John Woodhurst (4th from left).

The College is proud of its links with the Irish Studies Workshop at Soar Valley, Leicester and with the local Irish community in Newark. This year's programme of classes offered a considerable range of topics and modes of delivery. Individual classes included a range of topics and modes of delivery including talks on autobiographical accounts of the boat-train journey between Ireland and Britain, Irish stereotypes in Walt Disney cartoons, 'Iona: a small community or monastic town?', a comparative look at the theme of emigration in Irish and West Indian

writing, Josephine Feeney reading from her novel 'Life Story' and discussing the second generation experience, 'Migrants and Remaking Irishness', a lecture and slides discussing early Celtic culture between 500BC and AD200, two films on the roots of traditional Irish music and its future prospects, Irish identity in the work of Brendan Kennelly, and the life and work of Tom Barclay.

The College has operated a number of student exchanges with Kilkenny including the visit of a group of recreation students from Kilkenny to Newark in 1992. The following year a group of music industry studies students from Newark travelled to Kilkenny and the students attended the Ballyfermot Rock School Seminar in Dublin. Also in 1993 a writers group visited and worked with similar groups in Kilkenny and later on in the same year a 40 strong group of set dancers competed in Kilkenny with their counterparts.

The Co-Ordinator of Irish Studies at Newark and Sherwood, John Woodhurst, received an *Irish Post* Community Award in 1992 from the Irish Ambassador to Britain, Mr. Joseph Small, for being instrumental in developing these initiatives in Newark.

Full details of Autumn 1995 classes will be available in *Newsletter 7* or you can telephone John at the College on 0636-705921. The ten-week course costs £33 (with concessions to Senior Citizens and Unwaged).

THE SHEFFIELD COLLEGE

Take Ten has been running an Adult Education Programme called 'Ireland and Britain' for about five years. This academic year it has run a timely 'Making Sense of the Troubles', a short, day-time course and a longer, three term course 'Ireland and Britain' that looks at historical and socio-political issues in greater depth.

'Ireland and Britain' is run on Wednesday evenings at the Mount Pleasant Community Centre, Sharrow Lane, starting at 7p.m.. (Buses: No.22, 75, 76, 97, 501/2 and 247/8). The course is designed so that you can join in January and April depending on your particular interests and previous knowledge. The courses are recognised by

the South Yorkshire Open College Federation, which means you can get credits for your learning at levels 2, 3, or 4. You can also do one of the courses as part of a wider pre-access or access programme. Tutor: Steve Bond

For more information contact: Take Ten, Abbeydale Grange Site, The Sheffield College, Bannerdale Road, Sheffield S7 2EW. Tel: (0742) 509876

BIRKBECK COLLEGE University of London,
Centre for Extra-Mural Studies

***Certificate and Diploma in Urban Studies
Irish Studies***

Wednesdays, 6.00-9.00 p.m.

26 April-19 July 1995

14 class meetings, 2 visits (class meetings include one Saturday)

Tutor: Seán Hutton

The focus of this course is the Irish Community in Britain in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. It examines the causes and course of emigration; the changing nature of Irish settlement and of Irish communities over time; the experience of Irish people in Britain, and British perceptions and representations of the Irish. Issues around concepts of 'Irishness' and 'community', and the invisibility and/or exclusion of groups of Irish people within those contexts, will also be considered. The ways in which the visible Irish community has organised itself will be examined, and there will be a particular focus here on the contemporary period and on the Irish voluntary welfare sector. The course will also include consideration of the cultural and intellectual contributions of Irish people to British society.

This course forms one module towards a Certificate in Urban Community Studies.

Assessment is by coursework.

Further details from: The subject Officer, Urban Community Studies, Centre for Extra-Mural Studies, Birkbeck College, 26 Russell Square, London WC1B 5DQ (0171-631 6672)

SOAR VALLEY COLLEGE, LEICESTER

IRISH LANGUAGE CLASSES / NA GAEILGE

Beginners, Intermediate and Advanced (GCSE)

Wednesdays 7.00pm - 8.30pm

SET AND CEILI DANCE

Wednesdays 8.40pm - 10.10pm

New Open College Network Irish Studies Modules projected in:

IRISH FOLKLORE THROUGH STORIES

(Spring or Summer, 1995)

IRISH LABOUR HISTORY, 1830 - 1930

(starting 1996)

Initially the above will be 10 week courses. Further details to follow.

Enquiries: Nessian Danaher,

Irish Studies Workshop, Soar Valley College,

Gleneagles Avenue, Leicester, LE4 7GY

Tel: 0533-669625 Fax: 0533-660634

**MAKING CONNECTIONS: IRELAND,
BRITAIN AND THE SEARCH FOR
A LASTING PEACE**

A two day 'teach-in' and educational exchange

to be held in Sheffield

Friday 10th and Saturday 11th February 1995.

The main topics of the event will be: changing relations between Ireland and Britain; Civil Rights in Ireland and Britain; Ireland and Decolonisation; the comparative experience of Irish and Black people in Britain; Learning from each other.

Speakers and contributors will be from both Ireland and Britain. Sessions will be participant in format.

For further details, write to: Steve Bond, Take Ten, Sheffield College, Bannerdale Road, Sheffield S7 2EW, enclosing an SAE or phone Sheffield on 509876.

**12th ANNUAL INTERNATIONAL
CONFERENCE ON IRISH
DIMENSIONS IN BRITISH
EDUCATION**

Soar Valley College, Leicester
Saturday 8th April 1995

LECTURES

STEVEN FIELDING (*University of Salford*)

Irish Identity in Nineteenth and Early Twentieth
Century Britain.

BELINDA LOFTUS (*Arts and Cultural Development Officer,
Down District Council*)

'Mirrors: Orange and Green': Popular Art in Northern
Ireland'

WORKSHOPS

SEAMUS HEANEY'S POETRY

Professor John Lucas (*Loughborough University*)

**ROMANS AND CELTS - HISTORY AND
ARCHEOLOGY FOR RELEVANT NATIONAL
CURRICULUM KEY STAGES, TEACHERS AND
GENERAL**

Shelagh Lewis (*Adult Education Lecturer, Bucks LEA*)

THE 1830S DIARY OF HUMPHREY O'SULLIVAN
Emrys Evans

**TOM BARCLAY - THE VOICE AND MIND OF
THE SECOND GENERATION IRISH IN
LATE 19th CENTURY BRITAIN**

Nessan Danaher (*Co-ordinator, Irish Studies Workshop,
Soar Valley College*)

THE IRISH IN SCOTLAND

J.M. Bradley (*Caledonian University, Glasgow*)

ORANGEISM IN 19th CENTURY BRITAIN

Frank Neal (*University of Salford*)

TRADITIONAL MUSIC YOUTH WORKSHOP

(Three teachers and different instruments)

**THE CULRA TRADITIONAL IRISH MUSIC
CERTIFICATE SCHEME**

Joe Sheeran (*Comhaltas Ceoltoiri Eireann, Bradford*)

**IRISH WOMEN AND
THE SUFFRAGETTE MOVEMENT**

Louise Ryan (*University of Central Lancashire*)

MODERN SECOND GENERATION FICTION
Josephine Feeney (*Author and Leicester-based teacher*)

**WOMEN, WORKERS AND PEASANTS IN THE
CAUSE OF IRISH INDEPENDENCE**

Liz Curtis (*Information on Ireland*)

**GETTING IRELAND ON THE NATIONAL
CURRICULUM AGENDA - IRISH STUDIES IN
SECONDARY SCHOOLS**

Kevin Anderson (*London Irish Commission*)

IRISH LANGUAGE WORKSHOP

Micheal ó Siadhail

THE ANGLO-IRISH PEACE PROCESS

Kevin Bean (*University of Liverpool*)

THE ARCHEOLOGY OF THE IRISH CLAY PIPE

Peter Hammond (*Doctoral research archeologist*)

**TRADITIONAL MUSIC, SONG AND DANCE,
POETRY**

Gabriel Rosenstock and Micheal ó Siadhail
(*Organised in collaboration with Siol Phádraig (Brent)
Cultural Programme*).

**NOTE: All the above speakers and topics are
provisional and subject to confirmation
at the time of writing.**

Enquiries: Nessan Danaher,

Irish Studies Workshop, Soar Valley College,
Gleneagles Avenue, Leicester, LE4 7GY

Tel: 0533-669625 Fax: 0533-660634

There will be a coach from London arranged for this
conference. Contact Kevin Anderson at the Brent Centre
(071-624 3158)

Buoyant Mood at Liverpool

New degree : New staff : New premises

The new BA Honours in Irish Studies

Staff and students at Liverpool's Institute of Irish Studies are in enthusiastic mood. The new academic year has seen the commencement of the first full honours degree in Irish Studies in a university in Britain. The new year has also seen a large increase in the number of students taking courses in the Institute.

Expansion of Irish

Particularly gratifying is the growing number of students studying the Irish language and literature in Irish. Thanks to the generosity of the Irish government in establishing the Lectureship in Modern Irish, Irish is now taught at degree level and at adult evening classes in the University of Liverpool.* The number of 'student units' at undergraduate level taking courses in Irish has risen from 21 in the academic year 1993-94 to 73 in the current year. In addition, there has been a very good response to the increased provision of adult education classes. The advanced evening course, which was offered for the first time in October 1994, has attracted thirteen students, whereas only five or six were expected.

Managing development

The enthusiastic mood in the Institute has been further enhanced by the arrival of Ms Kathryn Meghen as Development Campaign Manager. Kathryn was until the end of September Assistant Director at the Royal Institute of the Architects of Ireland, based in Dublin. She has

considerable experience in marketing and in securing sponsorship from commercial and other organisations. Kathryn is looking forward to making a distinctive and positive contribution to the further development of the Institute.

Prestigious address

In view of increased numbers and increased activity, it is, therefore, timely that the Institute has moved into new, more spacious and better equipped accommodation at 1 Abercromby Square. It is a most desirable address! *It is marked number 55 on the plan of the University Precinct.*

For further information about the Institute and its courses, please contact:

Professor Patrick Buckland,
Director, The Institute of Irish Studies,
The University of Liverpool,
1 Abercromby Square, Liverpool L69 3BX.
Tel: 0151 794 3831 Fax: 0151 794 3836

** Irish may be taken in all three years of the B.A. Honours in Irish Studies; the Irish Pathway through the B.A. in Combined Honours (Arts); and the B.A. in Modern European Languages. There are each year adult evening classes in Irish at beginners', intermediate and advanced levels. It is also planned to introduce in 1995 a new postgraduate Diploma in Modern Irish Language and Society.*

IRISH STUDIES AT THE UNIVERSITY OF LUTON

A New Part-time Evening Course

The University of Luton has set up a new course in Irish Studies, offering Degrees, Diplomas and Certificates in Irish Literature, Culture and History. The course caters for a wide variety of interests, covering the leading writers, historical events and cultural developments in Ireland from the Eighteenth Century through to the present day. The organisation of the course is flexible and is intended to suit every student's needs. It is designed to suit part-time students and classes will take part in the evenings. It is taught by a team of recognised scholars of Irish literature and history. Course commences in October 1995. Some of the units that can be taken as part of Irish Studies at Luton include: Introduction to Irish History, Introduction to Irish Literature, Irish Short Stories, Ireland 1800-1922, Irish Drama, Contemporary Irish Literature, Irish State 1918-present, The Irish Civil War, National Identities, The Famine.

For more information write to:

**John Brannigan, Faculty Of Humanities,
University of Luton, 75, Castle Street, Luton, Beds. LU1 3AJ Tel: 0582-34111**

Irish Texts Society Publications

Pádaig ó Riain, *Beatha Bharra: St Finbarr of Cork: The Complete Life* (Irish Texts Society, 1994), xviii + 322 pp, £34 (retail); £17 (members) plus £2 p & p.

This volume, edited and introduced by the Professor of Early and Medieval Irish at University College, Cork, brings together for the first time all the textual evidence concerning the origins, about 1200, and the development, over almost seven hundred years, of the biography of St. Finbarr. Professor ó Riain argues that the saint, who spent his life on the Ards peninsular, became associated with Cork as a result of ecclesiastical politics which led to a re-shaping of his story. Representative texts of the main lines of development of the biography are edited and translated.

John Carey, *A New Introduction to Lebor Gabála Éirenn, The Book of the Taking of Ireland* (Irish Texts Society Subsidiary Series 1, 1993), 21 pp, £3.00 plus 50 p & p.

This pamphlet formed the new introduction to the reprint of the Society's edition of the eleventh century text, *Lebor*

Gabála Éirenn, edited by R. A. Stewart Macalister and originally published by the Society between 1939 and 1956.

Joep Leersson, *The Contention of the Bards (Iomarbhágh na bhFileadh) and its Place in Irish Political and Literary History* (Irish Texts Society Subsidiary Series 2, 1994), 72 pp, £3.00 plus 50p p & p.

This pamphlet, by the Professor of European Studies at the University of Amsterdam, presents a reinterpretation of this compilation of early seventeenth century texts, examining its political and literary context and themes, and indicating what he considers its unique importance.

These publications can be ordered through booksellers or obtained from:

The Irish Texts Society, c/o Royal Bank of Scotland, Drummonds Branch, 49 Charing Cross Road, Admiralty Arch, London SW1A 2DX.

Publication from the Federation of Irish Societies

Ute Kowarzik, *Developing a Community Response: The Service Needs of the Irish Community in Britain* (Federation of Irish Societies/Action Group for Irish Youth, 1994), iii + 58 pp, ISBN 1 87141067.

This study, produced by a Charities Evaluation Services' consultant, constitutes the most current record of issues and experiences affecting Irish people. With well over 1000 cases, it is one of the largest ever survey samples of

the Irish community in Britain. It presents, for the first time, a client profile of those who use the services of the Irish advice and support agencies, and highlights a number of issues of concern such as the extent of racial and sexual harassment, domestic violence and the extent of mental health problems experienced by clients.

Available, price £4.95 + £1.00 p & p, from Federation of Irish Societies, the Irish Centre, 52, Camden Square, London, NW1 9XB.

Something to Perfection Brought

*Jon Stallworthy's lecture on MacNeice was the centre piece
of an evening celebration of Irish culture in Guildford*

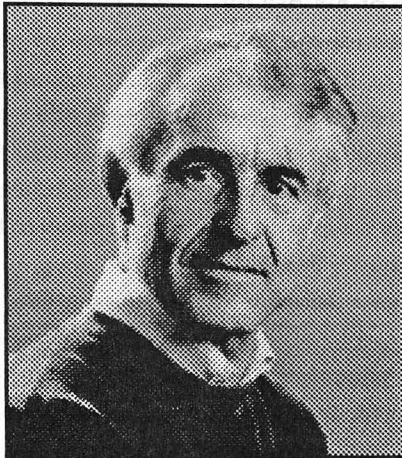
We celebrated in music, poetry and speech recently at the University of Surrey, Guildford, with an audience that included a representative of the Irish Ambassador, the Chancellor of Queens', the Mayor of Guildford, priests of the Catholic and other churches - and our new Vice-Chancellor, Professor Patrick Dowling. It was a gesture becoming to a university - a warm gesture to Ireland and a strong gesture to overlay tragic and shameful associations and remind us of Ireland's abiding genius.

Jon Stallworthy, poet, early Yeatsian scholar and biographer of Louis MacNeice (due out in February 1995), spoke on 'Irish Fathers and Sons', acknowledging the Book Festival theme of 'Generations'. Starting with Yeats (by Blake out of Ireland for the constant mother-element was Ireland), Stallworthy instanced his filial movement from the Blakean stance, 'without contraries there is no progression', to his mature acceptance that art, even the highest, rested on 'the rag and boneyard of the heart'.

Yeats was the father-figure to the young MacNeice. Sharing a love of Ireland (the romantic west coast of both their childhood holidays) they also shared a connection - ominous surely - with the Church of Ireland and an English education. Later, in their different ways, they were estranged from their motherland - 'Romantic Ireland's dead and gone' - 'the land of scholars and saints, my eye'.

At Oxford MacNeice was enthralled by Eliot, but lecturing in Classics at Birmingham University he turned his attention to again to Yeats, meeting the Arch-poet several times back in Ireland, and in 1941 publishing that first, full-length study, *The Poetry of Yeats*, penetrating and devoid of personal pleading. MacNeice, collecting his own poems together for his next book, declared his past life was over, and that life, of course, included Yeats. For MacNeice, of course, 'the best was yet to be' - but it was

Auden who wrote Yeats' famous elegy. Shortly after MacNeice's death in 1986, that elegy, according to Stallworthy, met its equal - 'At Carrowdale Churchyard' by the new young poet, Derek Mahon. Characteristically distinct in time and place, the elegy conjures up the poetry and the man: for Mahon, who called MacNeice a 'poet's poet', MacNeice is indeed the father-figure. For Longley too, another classics scholar with the attendant clarity and precision, the traits of MacNeice are there - in contemporary idiom and vivid detail (that list of flowers in 'The Ice Cream Man'), and Longley expressed his admiration in *The Selected Poems*. Muldoon claims descent from MacNeice, clear enough in the lyrical gift, the incertitude or subtle Irish insouciance, the delight in linguistic devices, the skill with the long, discursive and incident-packed poem.



Jon Stallworthy

It was an evening, then, with MacNeice as its centre-piece. It ended as it had begun with music composed by Andrew Toovey, graduate of the University, whose prize-winning music has been performed widely in this country and overseas. He gave us a range of Celtic moods with this *Lament*, *Strathspey* and *Reel*, and the *Nine songs for Ireland*, sung by Irish soprano, Jacqueline Horner, was preceded by readings of the poems, precise and plangent, by students of the Guildford School of Acting. The evening ended with Lullaby for Ireland, the final lines of Autumn Journal read over the music:

*Sleep to the noise of running water
Tomorrow to be crossed - however deep.
There is no rive of the dead, or Lethe.
Tonight we sleep
On the banks of the Rubicon - the die is cast.
There will be time to audit
The accounts later, there will be sunlight later,
And the equation will come out at last...*

Morag Morris

Play it again, Synge

In a year when Anglo-Irish issues have hardly been out of the news, the advent of six productions of *The Playboy of the Western World* to the British stage begs the question, 'Is this merely a coincidence?' From Edinburgh to London, from Bristol to Birmingham, the theatre-going public in this country have had the opportunity of considering this story of breaking away from tyranny as Northern Ireland strains at the leash.

But this is not a 'nationalist' play, I hear you cry. Was not Synge lambasted by the Nationalists of his day for presenting a play so far removed from their ideals? What must be remembered is that stories outlive their creators, taking on a life of their own with each retelling. Synge took this story from the Aran Islanders and fashioned it for his day; Synging into creation for his contemporaries in a style of his making. Directors who produce this play today pick up the songline Synge travelled but must unravel it to fit their own times. In 1994, this play sings of freedom.

When Synge looked at the Aran Islanders he saw the red of the women's petticoats as a metaphor for the murder in men's hearts, like the petticoats, hidden beneath a benign surface. It is in *The Playboy* that Synge lifted Mother Ireland's skirts and allowed the earthier concerns of her children to play awhile. Sexual desire and repression writhe around the words his protagonists utter. Bloodlust is vicariously sated. Voyeurism is as thickly

spread as butter on soda bread. Pride hangs like a mirror over the mantle, reflecting and refracting at the devil's own will. But the message that comes over louder than any other is, slay the oppressor, whether literally or metaphorically, the end result will be the same: freedom.

Director Lynne Parker finds *The Playboy* 'deeply ironic' and reflective of these times when 'men of violence' are being beckoned to the British hearth while the 'gap between a gallous story and a dirty deed' is as chasmic as ever. Her excellent production at the Almedia this autumn was devoid of traditional Irish music, a conscious decision to steer clear of the 'diddle-e-i' effect to which Ms Parker has seen other productions fall victim. This production was a powerful treatise on the wasted lives adherence to repressive beliefs engenders and an example to those who are prepared to take a stand.

Take what you will from the play; there's plenty there. Symbolically, Christy Mahon, the whipped schoolboy, grows in stature as he is nourished by admiration. His self confidence, so long undermined by tyranny, is restored. He walks away from old ways, old lies and deceits into the new and unknown. A frightening place, the future, but with liberty under your belt the Western world at least offers the possibility of fulfilment.

Madeleine Casey

Joint Annual Conference of THE AMERICAN CONFERENCE FOR IRISH STUDIES AND THE CANADIAN ASSOCIATION FOR IRISH STUDIES

at The Institute for Irish Studies

Queen's University of Belfast

25th June - 1st July

For further information contact:

Dr Brian Walker, Institute for Irish Studies,

Queen's University, Belfast BT9 6BQ

Tel: 0232-335137

Book Review

Catholicism in Ulster 1603-1983: An Interpretative History

by Oliver P Rafferty

Ireland is divided, not between a Catholic south and a Protestant north, but between a Catholic south and a mixed north. This is blindingly obvious, but it has taken the protracted troubles of the contemporary north to bring the implications home to historians. This history of northern Catholics and nationalists has until recently been subsumed within a wider Irish history. This is still one of the few books, and certainly the first general history, to treat the northern minority as a distinct phenomenon. The available research base is thin therefore. But although the coverage occasionally has to be somewhat impressionistic, the overall result is an insightful and carefully documented text. The book is essentially a social and political history of the Catholic community (with little reference to labour or economic issues), rather than an ecclesiastical study. It covers almost four centuries in three hundred pages, with a chapter each for the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, two chapters on the nineteenth and three on the twentieth.

Perhaps the most distinctive feature of Ulster Catholicism is that, very much like Ulster Protestantism, it sees itself as a community under siege. Although it has frequently sought to improve its position by adhering to all-Ireland movements - from Cardinal Cullen through Parnell to de Valera - the benefits have been mixed. It is a community which, argues Rafferty, has tended towards feelings of inferiority and alienation not just since the trauma of partition, but arising out of the success of the seventeenth-century plantation. In the circumstances it is not surprising that it has tended towards introspection and self-reliance, and towards a conservative style of Catholicism in which an over-fatalistic approach to the challenges of this life has not always been sufficiently discouraged.

Written by a Jesuit priest and pronounced free from theological error the book is, thankfully, not free of a critical and challenging tone. The Ulster bishops, in particular, come in for a bit of a bashing. Their 'obsession'

with clerical control at every stage in the educational process' restricted opportunity (p.173), their general tendency towards loyalty to the crown prior to 1914 'was tempered by an over-seriousness about their own position as successors of the apostles' (p.182) and, most serious of all, 'it is difficult to escape the conclusion that the northern bishops were content to sacrifice northern Catholic interests for their enhanced position as arbiters of public policy in the south after 1921' (p.220). The book ends in 1983, with the conjuncture of Sinn Féin's unprecedented success in the Westminster elections following the hunger strikes and the appointment of a strong opponent of IRA-Sinn Féin, Cahal Daly, to the see of Down and Connor. It is suggested that the 'increasing reserve' with which many, especially in the Church, approach nationalism has created 'enormous self-doubt about northern Irish Catholic identity', and that the Church consequently faces a major challenge to its leadership and role in the community from radical republicanism. Things have moved on a bit since then. More than a decade later it seems a little perverse to write about the hunger strike era from a 1983 perspective (p.282). This book is not a definitive study of Ulster Catholicism, but it is an excellent piece of pioneering. The chapters on the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, at least, will be valuable for both reference and insight to scholars at all levels. The author is too modest when he says that his book is aimed primarily at the non-specialist reader.

Hurst & Co, xiv, 306 pp. £30.00 and £12.95

ISBN 1 85065 138 8 and 207 4

Published October 1994

A C Hepburn

European Federation of Associations and Centres of Irish Studies

The last six or seven years have seen a remarkable development of Irish Studies in the British educational system, and the successful launching of numerous initiatives in this area by higher education institutions, adult and further education colleges, schools and voluntary organisations. This relatively recent interest in Britain in Ireland and things Irish is being paralleled in Europe where a number of universities have embarked, or are embarking, upon courses dealing with various aspects of Irish society, culture and civilisation.

The country with the most fully developed set of courses is France, where a number of universities, notably Lille, Paris, Caen, Rennes, Reims have, for some considerable time, been teaching and researching aspects of Irish Studies. The French Society for Irish Studies is a thriving and well established national body, producing a very well known and successful academic journal, *Études Irlandaises*, and disseminating information on Irish Studies in France.

With these developments in mind, a number of academics earlier this year discussed the idea of setting up a European Federation of Associations and Centres of Irish Studies, incorporating those national associations for Irish Studies

already in existence, and the various Centres for Irish Studies in universities and colleges in Europe. The French Society for Irish Studies agreed to organise and host an inaugural meeting in Paris on 2 July 1994. At this meeting, there were representatives from a number of universities in Ireland, Britain, France, Belgium, Germany, as well as members of the French Society and the British Association for Irish Studies. It was agreed unanimously that such a Federation should be created and a small steering committee was set up under the chairmanship of Professor Claude Fierobe, of Reims University to deal with the details of organisation. The immediate aim is to begin modestly by gathering and circulating information about what is happening in Europe in Irish Studies, encouraging collaboration between associations and research centres, and generally developing the European dimension which is becoming more than ever a major issue. Once the initial framework has been set up, the Federation will seek support from all those institutions working within Irish Studies, and will hopefully be able to add to their range of contacts, and to the scope of their teaching and research.

Jim O'Hara

CULTURE AND COLONIALISM: GENDER, ECONOMICS, CULTURAL PRODUCTION

UNIVERSITY COLLEGE GALWAY
22nd - 25th JUNE 1995

The aim of the conference is to think through the inter-relations of culture, gender and economics under colonialism, and to encourage inter-disciplinary contacts among those working in the fields of economics, women's studies, literature, history, sociology and politics.

For further information, please contact:
Dr Elizabeth Tilley, Department of English,
University College, Galway, Ireland.
Tel: 353-091 24411; Fax: 353-091 24102 or e-mail:
elizabeth.tilley@ucg.ie

MA CULTURE AND COLONIALISM UNIVERSITY COLLEGE, GALWAY

This multidisciplinary, one year, taught MA designed for graduates from the Arts and Social Sciences. It was established to further an understanding of the meaning of 'colonialism', 'post-colonialism', and 'neo-colonialism' across a range of disciplines. Our teaching staff is drawn from a variety of departments within the university. The course is uniquely affiliated to the Famine Museum and research archive at Strokestown Park House in Co. Roscommon, and students will be encouraged to make use of this facility.

Course Director: Dr Lionel Pilkington, Department of English, University College Galway, Ireland (Tel 353-91 24411 Ext 3078) or e-mail: lionel.pilkington@ucg.ie.

Irish Strand at History Workshop 28

University of Brighton, 11th - 13th November 1994

This year's event included a strand on 'The Irish and Britain 1914 - 1994: Histories, Memories and Identities'. A response to the peace process in Ireland, it set out to explore the complex relationships between the Irish people and Britain, placing current conflicts over identity, experienced by the people of Ireland on both sides of the border and in Britain, in the historical perspective of the recent past.

On Saturday morning we heard two papers from members of the Irish Studies Centre at the University of North London. Mary Harris presented an historical account of the constitutional position of Northern Ireland, from the process leading up to the Government of Ireland Act 1920, via the subsequent conflicts over the boundaries and legitimacy of the separate state, and on to the unsuccessful constitutional initiatives undertaken since the late 1960s. Mary Hickman examined historical debates about the Irish in Britain, taking issue with the models of 'community' used in accounts which either deny or assert the existence of a distinctive and homogeneous Irish ethnic identity formed against the pressures of a racist British culture; and proposing instead a pluralist conception of community, sensitive to the many forms of belonging and identification open to Irish people.

The two afternoon papers focused on cultural memories and their relationship to identities and politics. Jane Leonard from the Institute of Irish Studies at Queen's University, Belfast, made rich use of contemporary newspapers, archival sources and oral interviews to explore 'the forgotten histories of dislocated communities' - e.g. ex-British Army servicemen, northern nationalists, southern unionists - who were either excluded or felt marginalized as a result of partition in 1922. Graham Dawson from the University of Brighton, the strand coordinator, examined the inadequacies of English cultural responses to the Irish conflict in terms of a 'public forgetting' of its roots in the Anglo-Irish War and partition, and related this to the problem of British national identity posed by the decline and loss of Empire.

On Sunday morning attention turned to the historical formation and development of Unionism and Irish Nationalism. John Ballance, a member of New Consensus (Britain), examined the intertwining of religious and political currents within Unionist and Nationalist thinking of the Home Rule period. Analysing Unionist claims concerning the influence of the Roman Catholic Church within Irish Nationalism, and Nationalist responses to this critique, the paper identified the importance of anti-clericalism in the demise of liberal Unionism and the continuing hegemony of Orangism. Finally, Carol Coulter, an *Irish Times* journalist and a founding editor of the Dublin-based magazine, the *Irish Reporter*, spoke on the theme of 'The National Question in the South of Ireland: Recent Developments'. The re-emergence of the national question, static and ossified since the 1960s, was traced to a growing crisis of legitimacy in the southern Irish State which, together with the new dialogue in the North opened up by the IRA/Loyalist ceasefire, opens the possibility for a more inclusive and critical debate on the condition of Ireland and the overcoming of its historic polarizations.

Graham Dawson

I.A.S.A.I.L. Annual Conference

'Coming of Age'

University College, Cork

4th - 8th July 1995

For further information: Tel: 010-353 21 276871

**WRITING OUT OF IRELAND:
The Fiction and Autobiography of Irish Writers in Britain**

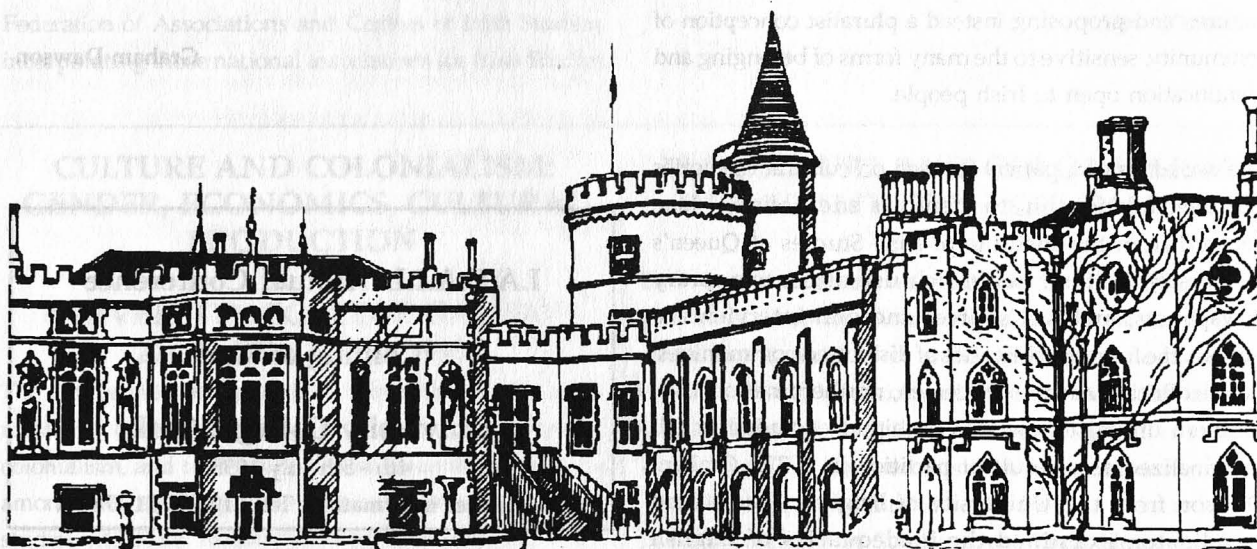
**A Week-end Conference to be held at
ST MARY'S UNIVERSITY COLLEGE *Strawberry Hill*
1-2 July 1995**

The conference will discuss the work of twentieth century Irish migrant and second generation writers living in Britain. It will feature readings by prominent contemporary Irish writers, such as **Maurice Leitch, Bernard MacLaverty, Moy McCrory, Patrick McCabe** and **Ann Devlin**, and seminar papers by leading critics. The conference is aimed at all those interested in Ireland's literature and the cultural experience of the Irish in Britain.

Conference Fees

- **Weekend, Full Residential - £80**
(Price includes registration, accommodation, coffee and all meals)
- **Saturday Only - £40**
(Price includes registration, coffee and meals)
- **Sunday Only - £20**
(Price includes registration, coffee and meal)

There is a 20% discount on fees for students and unwaged and a 10% discount for waged delegates who book before March 31st 1995. There will be a late bar and live music on the Saturday evening.



For full details of the programme, please send for a leaflet and registration form from:

Mrs Eileen Walker, 'Writing Out of Ireland Conference'

St Mary's University College, Strawberry Hill, Twickenham, TW1 4SX

Tel: 0181-892 0051

Fax 0181-744 2080

Obituary

DAME ELIZABETH MACONCHY

One of the most distinguished composers of our time died on 11 November 1994. the daughter of an Irish lawyer, Elizabeth Maconchy was born on 19 March 1907. She spent much of her childhood in Ireland, with her grandparents at Santry House and from 1916 with her parents in Howth. She studied with the celebrated Dublin piano teacher, Mrs Boxford, until at the age of sixteen she entered the Royal College of Music, London, sure that her vocation was to be a composer, having started to write music ten years previously. She was particularly influenced by her teacher, Vaughan Williams, and subsequently by Bartok. Determination and singleness of purpose as well as her outstanding talent were needed to succeed in what was then very much a man's world. She blazed the trail for her fellow female composers so that her daughter, Nicola Lefanu, and other composers of the next generation have largely been spared her struggles.

In 1930, the year that her orchestral suite, *The Land*, was performed at the Proms, she had married the scholar and librarian, William Lefanu, of the well-known literary family. Contrary to expectations this was the start of a very productive career, as well as of a successful marriage. She brought up two daughters and ran her house and garden with the same competent dedication that she was also giving to her music, but there was little time for a social life. She said that tuberculosis, which she defeated by sleeping outside in all weathers in a summerhouse, enhanced her creativity. Impossible here to itemise her prodigious output which covered every genre, but she is particularly renowned for her thirteen string quartets, written between 1933 and 1984.

touch with her relatives and friends in Ireland, especially with her close friend, the composer, Ina Boyle. Many of her commissions came from there, including the ballet *Puck Fair* for which Mamie Jellett designed and decor. She often used Irish texts for her vocal works. For example, Synge's translation of Petrarch formed the words of *My Dark Heart* the song cycle she wrote towards the end of her life. Other authors who also inspired her were Yeats, Auden and Manley-Hopkins. For her operas she had the knack of choosing plots, such as Hardy's short story, *The Three Strangers*, which have great dramatic potential, allowing her creative imagination its full scope in both sound and spectacle. They are gems of music and drama with many inspired touches. Her genius and understand of the young mean that *The King of the Golden River*, *The Jesse Tree* and *The Birds*, all written for children, are very much enjoyed and appreciated by the performers. This also applies to her dramatic song, *Samson and the Gates of Gaze* and *An Essex Overture*. Her last forty years were spent at Boreham in Essex overlooking the Chelmer valley and to me, her neighbour, many of her songs embody the mood of the place, as does *The King of the Golden River*, written during the great summer drought of 1976, when the whole valley was parched.

From 1959 to 1960 she was the first woman chairman of the Composers' Guild and, on his death, succeeded Benjamin Britten as President of the Society for the Promotion of New Music. Britten, Walton, Tippett: these names of her contemporaries may be better known to the general public today but in the years to come the name most frequently on the lips of future generations could Maconchy.

Although she settled in England, she kept closely in

Eleanor Burgess

Membership and Subscription Rates

New membership fees for the Association were agreed at the June Council Meeting to take effect from **1 January 1995**. They still represent exceedingly good value for money for an Association of this size and nature.

Membership runs from January to January:

Students/Unwaged	£12
Waged	£20
Corporate/Institution	£40

All **Overseas Applications** should include a £2 supplement to cover our postage costs. If you are sending remittances from outside Ireland and the UK please make sure that you send it in the form of **sterling money order** only.

If you join as a new member or **renew before 1st February 1995** then you will qualify for special discount rates of

£10 (unwaged and student)

£18 (waged)

If **current members fail to renew before 31st March, 1995** they will not receive **Spring (No.10)** and subsequent issues of **ISR/Newsletters**.

Only Cheques or standing order arrangement are acceptable (no cash) to:

Dr Tom Dooley (Honorary Treasurer) British Association of Irish Studies
142 Rydal Crescent, Perivale Middlesex UB6 8EQ England

Benefits

- 4 issues of *Irish Studies Review* No.10-13 (worth £12) posted to you
 - 2 issues (January, July) of a 25 page *BAIS Newsletter* (No.6 and 7) posted to you
- Institutional Membership now includes two copies of each *ISR* and *Newsletter* issue
- Biennial Conference to be held this September (8-10th) at University of Sunderland
 - Discounted price on Famine Facsimile Pack due in September 1995
 - Communication with a network of nearly 300 members with Irish Studies interests

Dates of Forthcoming Council Meetings and the Annual General Meeting

18th February (Council) London

3rd June (Council) London

8th-10th September (Council/AGM) Sunderland

25th November (Council) London

Application Form for BAIS

- 1 (a) New member (tick box) ☐
Please enrol me/my institution as a member of the BAIS *or*
(b) Renewing Membership (tick box) ☐
Please renew my membership of the BAIS.

I enclose a cheque/order for (tick one box below)

Individual Waged	£20	<input type="checkbox"/>
Student/Unwaged	£12	<input type="checkbox"/>
Institutioning	£40	<input type="checkbox"/>

- 2 Preferred title (eg Ms, Dr, Mr, Mrs)
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.....
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Please make cheques or orders (no cash) payable to **BRITISH ASSOCIATION FOR IRISH STUDIES**.

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Please pay to the BAIS Deposit Account (No.40196-154) of the AIB Bank, City Branch, Cavendish House, Waterloo Street, Birmingham, B2 5PP, Bank Sort Code 23/84/87, the sum of £ now and a similar amount on the 1st January each year beginning on the 1st January 1995 at debit of my account

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This order cancels any previous order which you may hold payable to BAIS.

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Send this completed form to:
Dr Tom Dooley, Honorary Treasurer, BAIS, 142, Rydal Crescent, Perivale, UB6 8EQ England

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Next Issue

- ☐ Mature Students' Experiences in Education
- ☐ Irish Musicology
- ☐ BAIS Conference Update
- ☐ Homeless in Dublin and London

Deadline to receive material for *Newsletter 7* is 1st May 1995

Next Issue

- 7 Mature Students' Experiences in Education
- 7 Irish Musicology
- 7 BAIS Conference Update
- 7 Homeless in Dublin and London

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