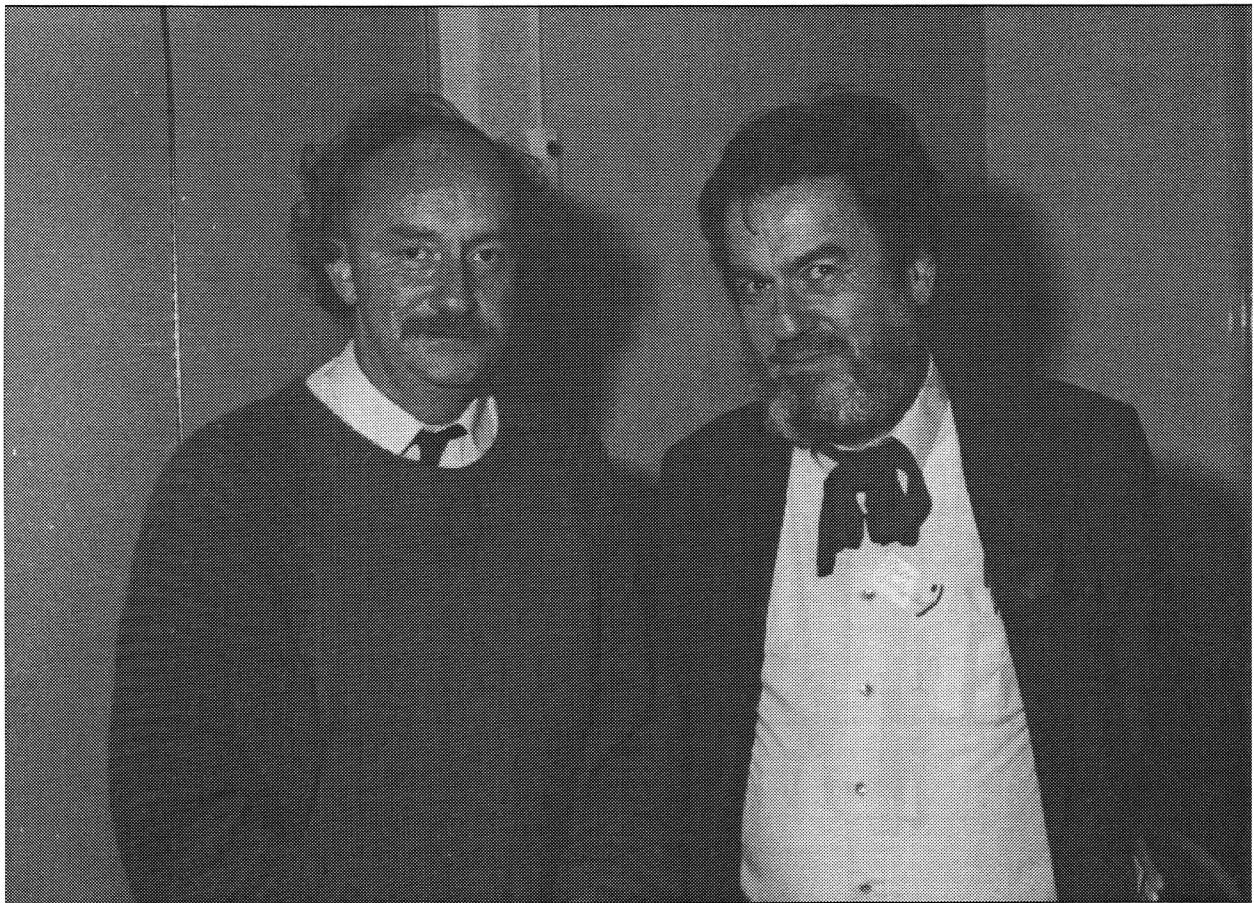


# British Association for Irish Studies

## Newsletter

Issue No 10 Winter 1996/Spring 1997



- Shaun Richards - Back to BAISics
- Edna Longley - Irish Studies: A Forward Look
- BAIS/Irish Permanent Debate in Hammersmith
- Van the Man in Bath
- The North-West's Awake

Edited by Lance Pettitt and Madeleine Casey

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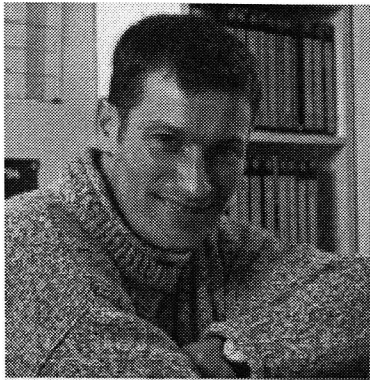
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## Looking Both Ways: The New Year and a New Decade for BAIS

This issue features two specially commissioned articles on the role of the BAIS over the last decade and the state of Irish Studies. I am very grateful to Shaun Richards and Edna Longley for their contributions which jointly give the membership considerable food for thought at the beginning of the year.



To accompany this spirit of reflection and looking to the future, the Council has devised a Membership Survey form included in this issue to find out what you, the members of the Association, think of the functions that the BAIS fulfils

and services we provide. Please, do take some time to fill it in and then send it back to Bob Bell. It will provide valuable information for the Council to develop policies for the future. To encourage prompt return, we are entering all forms which are returned before **31st March 1997** in a PRIZE DRAW, the winner of which will be entitled to a year's free membership and a £20 book token.

Given the nature of 'Back to BAISics' and 'A Forward Look', the editors think it would be useful to invite responses in the form of a letters page in issue 11 of the *Newsletter*. Please send in concise letters of no more than 200 words giving your views. The editors reserve the right to edit them and will try to print a representative selection. As the contents of this publication shows, there are many different initiatives taking place in Irish Studies around Britain and Ireland. The *Newsletter* always attempts to report on these and provide a forum for comment as well. The editors would like to thank *The Irish Post* for supplying Terry Smith's photographs of the Hammersmith conference (pp.13-14) and Sass Tuffin's photo on p.12.

### A Personal Note: Lance stands down

After two and a half years and five issues of the *Newsletter*, I regret to say that I am standing down as editor of the *Newsletter*. Much as I enjoy the task, commitments at St Mary's and related activities have become just too demanding on my time.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Madeleine Casey for joining and assisting me so readily, to Marie Ryan for doing a lot of typing on this issue, to Ian Mitchell and Ruth Mellor for their



work at St Mary's and the editorial team of *ISR* in Bath. A special thank you to Sarah Briggs who gave me a lot of advice and support when I was green in the business of getting the *Newsletter* out. I hope that members of the Association have been pleased with the difference in the *Newsletter* since I have been involved in it. I am genuinely sorry that I can't continue the work but I shall remain on the Publications Committee of the Council.

Madeleine, Mary Doran and Jerry Nolan will form an editorial group for future *Newsletters*. I wish them the very best of luck for the coming year and will pass on any advice that I can about the job. Some items have already been received, are in preparation or commissioned for issue 11 due out in July. All items for consideration should now be sent to Madeleine Casey at: 'Akaroa', Thistleworth Marine, Railshead Road, Isleworth, Middx. TW7 7BY. Dead line for submission is **14 May 1997**.

*Lance Pettitt*  
*Madeleine Casey*



## Back to BAISics

As Willie John McBride might have said, "Get your apologies in first". And while historians, post-mortem ones at least, might have decided that history is merely "a tissue of remnants and fabrications concealing an essential absence" some resemblance to the memories of others involved in establishing BAIS is probably expected of a piece that purports to record the ten years of the association's existence, and particularly its origins. In striking a determinedly personal note, that these are my perceptions, recollections, understandings, of BAIS's original intentions, and subsequent achievements, and simultaneously attempting to cover my selective memory by apologising for its lapses, says something about the association; namely the fact that discussion (a more polite word than discord) and debate (a more polite word than rows) has marked its progression from infancy to whichever of the seven ages of associations it may now have reached.

While the records will probably date the creation of BAIS from a September 1985 conference at St Peter's College, Oxford, and the establishment of an interim committee (formalised at the AGM in 1986) the origins of the association pre-date that Oxford event by some twelve months. BAIS, in fact, was the brain-child of Mary FitzGerald and David Cairns at the July 1984 conference of the International Association for Anglo-Irish Literature at the University of Graz, Austria. The fact that they were then employed in neighbouring institutions (Crewe and Alsager College of Higher Education and North Staffordshire Polytechnic) led Mary and David to speculate on the possibility that if similar interests as the ones serendipitously discovered in Austria existed in other (perhaps isolated) individuals in institutions across Britain, then they should be supported and developed by being brought together. And the medium for this was to be BAIS. The Oxford conference of 1985 was then to bring together those, primarily higher education academics, who were known to be active across the disciplines which constituted Irish Studies so as to propose and then formalise an association.

The record of the St Peter's conference makes instructive reading. Attended by the then Ministers of State for Education in both Britain and Ireland (Sir Keith Joseph and Mrs Gemma Hussey) who "welcome[d] the formation of the Association" (Keith Joseph) as "a singularly propitious event" (Gemma Hussey) it addressed the issue of establishing Irish Studies as an academic discipline within higher education and advanced the University of Keele, in

collaboration with Crewe and Alsager CHE and North Staffordshire Polytechnic, as the location of "the first degree-course in Irish Studies in a University on this island ... an important departure [which] will be seen by many as a test case". The fact that Keele and Staffordshire are now, a decade later, planning to introduce Irish Studies to the two universities demonstrates that this planned flagship simply did not float. The association survived and ultimately thrived despite these aborted plans in its early years, but while today's association is an economically viable and, judging by the two hundred or so who attended the day of the 1996 AGM, flourishing enterprise, it lacks - to my (now) outsider's eyes - much that was first promised.

A year on from St Peter's BAIS met again for a conference at the then Oxford Polytechnic when it was agreed by the now formally constituted executive that as Keele had not progressed beyond its statement of intent the University of Liverpool, and more specifically Patrick Buckland, was to be given the backing of BAIS in the development of an Irish Studies programme. Pat's success is evident in Liverpool's Institute of Irish Studies which now has programmes at B.A., M.A. and Ph.D. level but the relationship between BAIS and Liverpool has not been marked by mutual support in the pursuit of a common goal and the absence of Pat, or other Institute staff, from the present BAIS committee, suggests that what started as a combined operation has long since splintered into separate ventures.

And so the Keele initiative was superseded by Liverpool's success but it was still not the first institution to give a formal status to "Irish Studies on this island". That honour goes to the University of North London (then Polytechnic) where Mary Hickman established an Irish Studies centre in 1986. Mary's name is not among the list of participants at St Peter's and while her subsequent presence on the BAIS committee overcame that initial lack of awareness it suggests that what BAIS failed to achieve from the outset - and perhaps has still not achieved - was a position as a harmonising force which simultaneously defined and developed the Irish Studies agenda while being both sensitive to and supportive of the various and often competing claims of individual institutions and constituencies.

There was always a tension in the early years of BAIS with regard to its perceived constituency and perceived (and actual) membership; basically the extent to which it could embrace all



areas of education (primary, secondary, tertiary and adult) while simultaneously responding to an audience based in the Irish community in Britain. The success of the BAIS-supported Soar Valley conferences or that of the Irish Language subcommittee, Sixth Form conferences in Northern Ireland and the BAIS lecture series demonstrates that BAIS is indeed a broad church but the membership certainly was, and probably still is, drawn primarily from academics in higher education and it is in this area that the success of BAIS is, while concrete, still partial.

Certainly BAIS played a major part in creating a climate in which Irish Studies developed at undergraduate and postgraduate level in at least six higher education institutions. The establishment of the Carroll Chair of Irish History at Oxford which is held by Roy Foster was due in no small part to the fund raising initiative of BAIS. The successful *Irish Studies Review* was "pump-primed" with BAIS funds. BAIS conferences and lecture series have been addressed by the major figures in Irish Studies in both Britain and Ireland. And yet.....

The success of Irish Studies over the past decade, which is also the success of BAIS, is potentially the creation of a major problem for the association if it wishes to realise objective 2.1 of the 1985 draft constitution and be the first site where 'communication [occurs] between those interested in Irish Studies in all disciplines.' The last BAIS conference held at the University of Sunderland in September 1995 overlapped with the European Society for the Study of English conference held at the University of Glasgow which had an Irish "strand" in the programme. The choice of where to be for academics engaged in Irish Studies should have been obvious, yet at least seven British-based academics - actual or potential BAIS members - gave papers at Glasgow. The reasons no doubt were multiple, but the fact that a choice was made in favour of Glasgow inevitably suggests that BAIS does not occupy pole position in the minds of academics on whose ideas the future development of Irish Studies is dependent. A similar point can be made with regard to the publication of a journal, a much debated issue in the association's early years. While the highly professional *Irish Studies Review* produced by Bath College of Higher Education serves as the BAIS house journal its content is more "popular" academic than scholarly. The scholarly dimension, that position on the cutting edge which should be that of BAIS is occupied, as far as Britain is concerned, by *Bullán*, the creation of two Oxford postgraduates. One of the major conferences in Irish Studies -

"Sold Out" this year - is held at Bath CHE, and in a period in which higher education funding for conference attendance is being cut back the success of Bath inevitably poses problems for BAIS. Quite simply which conference is it worth going to (can one afford to attend) to present a paper and hear what is happening in the discipline?

BAIS is here and, one hopes, here to stay - but not to stay still. It has to move on, to incorporate new people and ideas but above all to aspire to be the premier location for Irish Studies, the association that people *have* to join, whose conference they *must* attend if they want to engage in current debates and developments. The list of participants at St. Peter's contains the names of many who were and still are making major contributions to Irish Studies but their present profile in BAIS is muted at best. If BAIS is not the location where all engaged in Irish Studies share their ideas then the next ten years may see continuation but they will not see creativity. Mary FitzGerald's concluding words to her opening address at St. Peter's are as relevant now as they were in 1985: "Irish Studies must now assemble the questions to which it is to address itself if it is to be as politically useful and as exciting intellectually as it should be."

**Shaun Richards**

## IRISH STUDIES: A Forward Look

Not long after the founding of BAIS, I published an article in *Text and Context* (No. 3, Autumn 1988) which asked for greater self-consciousness on the part of academics engaged in 'Irish Studies'. I wrote:

Do I belong with the studiers or the studied? On the British or Irish side of the fence? On the fence? Liverpool University's Institute of Irish Studies accurately calls itself 'the first teaching and research centre of its kind in Great Britain' (that at Queen's University, Belfast being the first in Ireland), but less accurately desires to 'increase understanding and respect between the UK and Ireland'. So who is proposing to understand whom? ... It is, of course, the continuing loose equation of 'Ireland' with the Republic, and of 'Irish' with what is neither Unionist nor Protestant, that generates ambiguity. Or, rather, the ambiguity root-meaning: 'movement in two directions' - of the context undermines the very title of BAIS. In other words, it can never be an 'Objective' band of researchers with a given 'subject'..... Northern Ireland is the microcosm of a culturally unfixed situation in which many students of Ireland share, and which all must address.

I still think that Irish studies were post-structuralist *avant la lettre*. The Irish question often phrases itself as 'who speaks?' Whether this unfixedity derives from the abnormal state of the 'nation', as some would argue, or from a shifting and many-faceted contest over authority, definitions and conceptual frameworks, the interest of Irish literature is bound up with complexities of transmission and reception. Similarly, the interest, or potential interest, of Irish studies depends on the multiplicity of perspectives, cultural as well as disciplinary, inter-cultural as well as inter-disciplinary, that can be brought to bear. Margaret O'Callaghan, chairing a session at a conference on Northern Ireland (organised by Notre Dame's Keough Centre for Irish Studies, Royal Irish Academy, 30-31 October 1996), was struck by how different the political landscape looked when viewed from Dublin, Belfast, and Cambridge. Politically and academically, with varying ratios between the two, you might add Liverpool, Notre Dame, Strawberry Hill, Royal Holloway, the Keele-Stafford axis, Cork, Galway, Limerick, Boston, British Columbia; not to mention the multi-cultural IASAIL map, Oxbridge faction fights, and - most kaleidoscopic of all, perhaps - the differences of approach within and between the universities in Dublin. Meanwhile, web-sites ramify and entangle on the Internet.

Even before the Internet, however, the intellectual traffic to and from Ireland was peculiarly intricate. Academics are often nomads, physically and conceptually, but Irish studies carry extra baggage. The interests of many researchers are conditioned by upbringing,

domicile, family history, religion, or by resistance to some or all of these circumstances. Hence such cross-currents as southern Catholics working on unionist ideology; protestant-republican literary criticism; Dubliners investigating Ireland and the Great War; Spanish film-makers deconstructing *The Quiet Man*; a Dutch professor of European Studies telling an Oxford professor who has recently acquired Irish citizenship, 'It is a matter of regret to see an eminent Marxist critic, schooled as few others in Marxist dialectics, so badly carried away by national enthusiasm as to forget Lukacs and Benjamin's calls for rational openness to historical contradictions'; students from England reading Seamus Heaney, deciding to go native in Mossbawn studies, then reading Paul Muldoon or Medbh McGuckian and losing their bearings for ever.

Since most research tends to redefine starting-points as well as objectives, 'diaspora', that term so dubiously borrowed, might more aptly symbolise migrations of the mind. Yet it is also clear that some perspectives are available only through a particular lens: Irish studies in Ulster or Munster are right to highlight regional themes or regional variations. Similarly, some members of BAIS specialise in concerns like emigration/ immigration, the Irish in Britain, emigrant autobiography, 'the Irish experience of discrimination and racism'. Problems arise - in Britain, Northern Ireland, the US - when local context and discipline pull in different directions. Irish studies have strong and crucial attraction as a branch of academia which, like gender studies, promises to illuminate the self in history and connect with a wider community. This strength is also a weakness. It risks excluding the talents of those without 'ethnic' qualifications or compensatory ardour. So my main general point is the constant need to ensure that Irish studies are pursued in a liberal, 'rationally open' and expanding universe. (I have nightmares of entrapment in infinitely recurring conference papers.) Thus one of the positive signs, despite the depressing lack of academic jobs, is the number of keen, inventive graduate-students from all parts, some already running conferences or journals.

My second, related point is that we should try harder to recognise, or even declare, biases and interests which are not merely personal but cultural and institutional. This point is not necessarily covered by global theoretical protocols; and, under whatever protocol, no-one can have access to their entire political unconscious. We are much better at spotting motes than beams - mote-spotting, indeed, remains a thriving sector of Irish studies. Meanwhile, one of the least researched areas is the institutional history of education and

university disciplines in the Irish context. Among recent advances are the outburst of selfconsciousness over the anniversaries of Trinity and 'the godless colleges'; Sean Farren's *Politics of Irish Education 1920-65* (Institute of Irish Studies, 1996); and the work of Greta Jones, Nicholas Whyte and others on the history of science in Ireland. Research that historicises our own activities can help us to walk the wobbly tightrope between attachment and detachment.

One of the valuable elements in historical and sociological research has been the modification of models, frameworks and theories with reference to Irish particularities. The library of writings on Northern Ireland surely means that it ain't easy. In the literary and cultural spheres there has been less progress, if more excitement, despite the gradual development of genuine argument over the applicability of post-colonial theory. Lawrence Taylor, discussing the low profile of anthropology in the Irish academy, notes politely that 'inter-disciplinary Irish studies ... suffer from a wide, and possibly growing, gap between historians and literary theorists' (*The South Atlantic Quarterly*, Vol. 95, No. 1, Winter 1996). He might have added that the American exponents of 'readymade' post-colonial theory, or of post-modernism, would benefit from absorbing his own fieldwork on Irish Catholicism. But he can't compete with this sentence on the bomb in the back garden of 10 Downing Street: 'Against January 1991's globally visible images of smart-bombs exploding target sites in virtual space stood this PIRA assertion of a liminal space momentarily controlled by them, a simple actualisation ... of the ideology and dimensionality of the Celtic Twilight.' For Americans to bring the politics of identity to Irish studies is to bring coals back to Newcastle. Nor, perhaps, should graduate-students from Nebraska be encouraged to write about Ireland as 'periphery'.

English Marxist theory has a different history both in itself and in relation to Ireland. Here left-wing post-imperial guilt mingles with more traditional forms of sentiment. Too much ink has been spilt on the sins of Matthew Arnold, while contemporary errors go unchallenged. So long as the mirror flatters, Ireland does not always object to its role as exotic Other, and mutual education is neglected. But, to get to the third main point on my list, what about the rest of 'these islands'? I am surprised that Irish studies in Britain (and Ireland) have not more often made common cause with Welsh or Scottish studies, or *vice versa*. It seems a waste for everyone to be moaning, in separate huddles, about Anglocentric hegemony, or

not making connections where religion or language is concerned. ('Celtic' studies do better.) Perhaps post-ukanian studies retain race memories of old rivalry within the empire. Perhaps the Republic pretends that it has said goodbye to all that. But Ireland's relation to Britain is a European relation, too. At the IASAIL conference in Hofstra University (July, 1996) Willy Maley used Spenser to mark the absence of Scotland from discussions. Graham Walker's *Intimate Strangers: Ulster and Scotland* is one recent example of what can be achieved. And in *Irish Review* 19 (Spring/ Summer 1996) Steven G. Ellis argues that 'the most appropriate context of explanation is ... frequently an archipelagic rather than an Irish one'.

Probably much of this appears reactionary rather than forward-looking. But the sector of Irish studies that I know best has sometimes run theoretically too far ahead of itself. More editing and contextualisation is required. More close reading. Less stress on the canonical and on the contemporary. And, if the contemporary is to be stressed, it should be as literary criticism, not as dissertation-fodder. It is easier to unmask ideology than to discover or define value. Criticism of all kinds matters, since the Irish public, in its periodic fits of self-congratulation, can be an alarming spectacle. At the Frankfurt Bookfair (October 1996) self-image rather than self-consciousness was to the fore. Mary Robinson talked about the Republic now seeing itself in the glass of Europe. But perhaps it's time to stop looking in mirrors or, at least, to treat Irish studies as a hall of mirrors.

This is not to endorse a postmodernist relativism, but to emphasise again the complexity of the existing and potential dialogues between perspectives. Here interdisciplinarity seems as crucial as it is difficult. Therefore the School of English at Queen's has decided to mount a conference (30 June-4 July 1997) on 'Stories of Ireland: Literature, History, Culture'. Among the speakers will be Paul Bew, Christopher Harvie, Joep Leerssen and Anne Rigney. Please come.

**Edna Longley**



## Glittering Caves of Ambiguity

That O'Nolan indulged in (or should that be *employed*?) pseudonyms is indisputable. Moreover, many of his *personae* existed unnamed (who is "The Brother's" interlocutor?). Claud Cockburn, quoting Niall Sheridan, remarked: 'his temperament was essentially aristocratic, fastidious and private.' That, as Caoimhgin ó Brolcháin suggests (Newsletter No. 9), his pseudonyms largely correlated with his use of an *untersee* motif very probably derived from *An tOileanách* is perhaps less defensible. The latter might be more appropriately denominated back-to-the-womb figuration. But, there is another, literary and mythological connection, which we will mention later.

Influence there was, yes. But, perhaps the "exorcism" worked ...? The aesthetic test should surely be: is anything significant in literary terms discernible? Otherwise, we are discussing the hypothetical psychology of the individual originator, with all the pitfalls of that species of discussion.

It is unfortunate to cite *A Bash in the Tunnel* without making clear that the reference of the conceit was, explicitly, to James Joyce. The issue of *Envoy* to which the piece was contributed was centred upon Joyce. 'I think the image (ie of the solitary drinker sitting on a dining-coach loo, in a tunnel) fits Joyce: but particularly in his manifestation of a most Irish characteristic - the transgressor's resentment with the non-gressor,' observed O'Nolan.

Are we to infer that he implied any significant identification of Joyce with himself? Unlikely. *Myles* or *Flann* would at once have seen the humour of such a proposition. Just as O'Nolan remarks: 'Joyce spent a lifetime establishing himself as a character in fiction. Beginning with importing real characters into his books, he achieves the magnificent inversion of making them legendary and fictional. It is quite preposterous.' (*A Bash in the Tunnel*.)

Consider. Much of O'Nolan's writing was *not* concerned with immurement, of whatever species. Where it was, it served a purpose. The reason for Mike's and Hackett's encounter with St Augustine of Hippo in the company of de Selby, for example (*The Dalkey Archive*), is to provide opportunity for airing sceptical views on religious belief and general piety, reminding the reader, *en passant*, of the more heterodox, even scandalous aspects

(Manicheism, marital irresponsibility) of Augustine's own biography, under the simulacrum of a conversation with the saint's *encorpified* spirit (The Dublin accent was unmistakable). Surely this has as much to do with a Witch of En-Dor scenario as with *An tOileanách*? Moreover, it is obviously designed *pour épater les bourgeois*.

O'Nolan's desire for pseudonymity seems likely to have been at least partially a function of his dual existence as both writer and official (in the latter capacity, he was not permitted to publish under his own name). That he should have thus sought refuge from pressure is unsurprising. Three very different examples, though for not totally dissimilar reasons, are Martin Marprelate, George Elliot and Alfred Aloysius Horn (the last procured a foreword from Galsworthy! See the Cape edition, London, 1927.)

There is so much else ..... What are we to say of The Brother? Of Keats and Chapman? Of Sur Tharbhaigh Baigineal and Éadbhart Hill? Of Sergeant Pluck? Of *Slattery's Sago Saga*? Of Faustus Kelly? What of the author of the hilarious

*My song is concernin'  
Three sons of great learnin',  
Binchy and Bergin and Best?*

Yet, ingenuity may add other examples to the ó Brolcháin hypothesis. The coffin whence Sir Myles resurrects, for example; the room in which Dermot Trellis abides, whence he is escorted or abducted by the Pooka MacPhellimey; the day-room in the Police Station, and Policeman Fox's room-in-the-wall, as well as the subterraneous regions accessed by a lift, in *The Third Policeman*. However, to cite such features in this way smacks of what Robert Lafont has called 'un esprit alerte a toute coincidence pour en tirer argument' (*Catharisme et litterature occitane: la marque par l'absence*; in: *Les Cathares en Occitanie*, Paris, 1982, p343).

Maybe we can approach the spirit of O'Nolan quite closely in briefly considering the title: *At Swim-Two-Birds*. While, on one level, this obvious translation of *Snám-dá-én* refers us to vernacular Anglo-Irish culture, it is simultaneously a much deeper reference. *Vadum Duorum Avium* not only refers to the *Book of Armagh* and

thus to St Patrick (*Venit ergo Patricius sanctus per alueum fluminis Sinnœ per Vadum Duroum Auium in Campum Ai* - Stokes and Strachan [edd.]: *Thesaurus Palaeohibernicus*, II, 264) (*Binchy has his hash and parsley ..... We have four of the buggers in our place and they'd make you sick with their shamrocks and shenanigans and bullshit.* - St Augustine in *The Dalkey Archive*); it refers also to the site of Clonmacnoise, hard by the ford, and to all that implies in history, and in culture.

All O'Nolan's likely reasons for so naming his *mélange-novella* (not, perhaps, wholly unlike the *Buile Suibhne*) would take too long to examine in detail here; it does seem the work was generally conceived to represent a totality of cultural heritage and awareness - from Fionn-saga, to Joyce and beyond - *silence, and punning* - *A View of the State of Ireland*, if one will.

What Alfred Nutt, over a hundred years ago, called 'the Sahara of criticism' is a dangerous area. So let us concede that, in the general awareness of Anglo-Irish cultural tradition, immurement, under water or anywhere else, has an obvious role, literally and figuratively, from the imprisonment of Walter, his cousin, by William de Burgo (assassinated at Carrickfergus), to the legend of Lough Neagh (whether in Tom Moore's hands or not), to Lady Gregory's records of folk-fear of the *liss*, and to the hideous historical record of imprisonment and judicial murder in Ireland, whether of Lord Edward FitzGerald or the captured participants in the Easter Rising. However, it is only one of many elements O'Nolan employed in his tapestries - and it may not always be only what we think it is. If it has a function beyond itself that function is echoic, reverberative. So is much else. We should notice, cautiously, the conditions of Le Clerque's position:

*This matter is outside the true province of the conscientious  
commentator inasmuch as being unable to say  
ought that is ..... useful, he must preserve silence.*  
(*The Third Policeman*, Ch 8, note 1)

- O'Nolan's own, layered irony. Was not the eponymous Le Clerque condemned - by Bentley? We ought not to seek to pinion Prometheus, nor, if one may so put it, to tie the *kangaroolity* down. Otherwise, we shall, in Flann's own words once more, be probably

venturing into 'indubitably Marxian data, and next thing you know I will have hair on my face.'

Moreover yet, there is still left the literary and mythological possibility we mentioned earlier. O'Nolan's acquaintance with early Irish literature seems not to have been unextensive. It may be he paralleled the Otherworld of Aengus Og or of the *Aisling Mac Con Glinne* with the inventions specified here, to give himself the opportunity of situations transcendent of normal terrestrial boundaries. De Selby might be an avatar of Aengus Og, for example.

*Others abide our question .....*

*But, at the end, Joyce will still be in his tunnel, unabashed.*

*And drinking largely sobers us again.*

Brian O'Nolan  
Flann O'Brien  
Myles na gCopaleen  
George Knowall

*Martin Reekes*

## Migrant Memoir

**I**t's 1948, I'm 18, with Leaving Cert, in a small town between Dublin and Cork, and it's time to start the big adventure of landing the first job. It's got to be in Ireland surely, either in one of the adjacent towns or even Dublin or Cork! Dozens of applications and SAEs on, not even one interview on the horizon, and despite the required SAEs, very few replies even, never mind the chance of an interview! A friend has gone to London, to cousins at first, and was happy in an office job. On her recommendation and without an interview, I was offered a typist's job on a month's trial at four pounds and ten shillings a week (about £4.50), and my friend had by now a bedsit in Maida Vale so I was offered one too at 27s 6d weekly (about £1.50). So I set off for London via Holyhead, never having been further than an accompanied holiday mainly to Tramore or very occasionally Dublin even! So lots of tears and feeling homesick already, I set forth. Friends living in Dublin escorted me to Dun Laoghaire and then I was on this awful cattle boat called 'The Princess Maud' with the awful feeling of completely being alone and everyone else seeming to be in a group - family maybe or friends. So already I was feeling what the heck had I done as I saw the harbour lights disappear.

It was January so it seemed I was engulfed in this pitch blackness. Then the transfer at Holyhead to this awful over-crowded train which was overheated. Arrival in Euston at 6.45 am, and was conscious of the 'different' accent straight away, and everyone milling about, and I felt lost. My friend met me and I settled into the tiniest bed-sitter. Tiny bed, kitchen type chair, chest of drawers, small wardrobe and an upright minuscule gas contraption - the bottom 'window' of which was the heating element and a ring at the top was the 'cooker'! Complete absence of plugs in the room, in case you used any electricity other than the light, so if you had any idea of using an iron, hairdryer or - perish the thought - electric fire to augment the little window gas fire, you could forget it! The housekeeper used the plug on the landing to use the Hoover so occasionally if in a hurry to go out, we could be seen sneaking out to the landing for a quick swish of current for the hairdryer. So you can imagine, non-iron fabrics had to be the order of the day. Luckily there was a 'bubble' cotton-like fabric called seersucker cotton which didn't need ironing, and so, the adventure had begun! The job was okay. It must have been, as although over the years the firm was taken over three times, I stayed with them for 37 years, until retirement.

It was an adventure though to manage money for the first time ever, and to wake up to the fact that food didn't just appear at meal-times; soap and other basics had to go into the weekly budget, and to cap it all, for the first year there was food and clothing rationing - the coupon system, which was fair, as even if you had lots of money, you still could only get the same amount of butter, tea and so on. Of course, if you had money there was always a restaurant. It was a challenge writing out the shopping list, which usually came at the tail end of priorities after rent, money for 'the pictures', a weekend dance, of course, was an absolute 'must', and always bearing in mind the 'holiday fund' as the saving up, and counting the days started immediately! Shopping was mainly done at a small Sainsburys in Kilburn or Edgware Road where they cut your ration of butter using the wooden 'spades', and your cheese ration off a big block with wire. You got crafty after a while and used peanut butter to make your ration go further! Lyons' tea-shops were still around, and you could occasionally treat yourself to a cup of tea and their apple tart, which had a sickly sweet filling (on reflection now!), and dollop of artificial cream. Saturday we loved to walk in Kilburn High Road (they say, "the only place the Irish took over without firing a shot") as then it was nearly all Irish accents, and there was the hope that maybe you might bump into someone from home. The letters from home were so important. I wonder why it was always the Mothers who wrote to us, and if you were lucky like me, mine made the home news come alive. The telephone was not in general use like today.

For those wishing to change jobs, there was no shortage. Most of us supplemented our job income with a second part-time job. Baby-sitting a whole evening was seven shillings and six pence but you got a meal of sorts and these people usually had a television which was a great treat. Another job was evening telephonist at a hotel. The attraction again being the evening meal with the money earned, so balancing the budget became fun. The 'serious' clothes shopping had to be for the dancing outfits. Usually skirts and tops as you could then ring the changes. Very full skirts were the vogue then with stiff petticoats and 'ballerina' flat shoes. My Mum had a sense of humour and once sent me a totally impractical pink petticoat 'confection' of net, satin and lace with the card "Now I've done my best - start praying for windy corners". We did enjoy the dancing. The Catholic Club called 'Charlie Macks' in Victoria, and the one at the Coach Station, upstairs. They were friendly and usually lively and we sometimes ventured further afield to the Hammersmith Palais even! The London Palladium too was great



value - the 'gods', of course! They had variety programmes there and the bill was often changed every fortnight. We got to see top US stars: Frank Sinatra, Johnny Ray, Billie Ekstein, Frankie Saine etc, and it was great. There definitely was no miming to records! One memorable concert was in Earls Court with Louis Armstrong and an all star band - the first time I saw a revolving stage.

The biggest problem was accommodation because if the landlord got tired of you, you had no protection. You just got notice. They did this as a way to re-let the room at a higher figure. One place I was in, the landlady got rid of everyone after two years to do just that. New tenants were told by the others how it was done. You just got this long envelope in the hallway with a 'By Hand' notice on it and inside she just concocted some excuse to get rid of us and off you go, perusing the notice boards again! No single women were eligible for a mortgage so that was out. Some preferred to share a flat. Council flats were allocated on a points system and if you were alone and not very ill, you didn't even get on the list.

We flocked mainly to Quex Road for mass on Sundays, and you always met someone you knew or anyway there was a togetherness about it. We visited some Irish families then over the years and life was quite good really, with regular trips 'home', especially at Christmas. 'Home for Christmas' had a very special ring about it, especially if you were lucky enough to have both parents alive. You never questioned your identity. You were Irish, so home was over there.

Now retirement has crept up and the home 'location' point decision cannot be shelved round many more corners as one is running out of corners! The scene in Ireland has changed. Parents and lots of friends long dead, RIP, and even in the small towns, new families have moved in and one sometimes feels a visitor there. Considered 'English' over there, and 'Irish' here! One, of course, can refer to the gospels for analysis of the restlessness. We are not meant to get it together here. Let's blame it on the Irish politicians who could never cater for its minuscule population (entire population less than a medium UK city). I would love to say to Mary Robinson and Co to treat those who emigrated in the 1950s and before fairly; give us a vote in our country so that we could influence the politicians into looking after the current would-be emigrants. Also it is grossly unfair that past emigrants who, in a majority of cases, sent a percentage of income home to relations in need, should not be denied the free travel afforded to Irish residents. These people also spent - and spend(!) - large sums in holidaying over there, so it would also be a money spinner. It is not as if elderly people would be 'jet-setting' daily on the railway system. Most people will have enough of travelling to get to destination point. It would be justice for older Irish citizens. But then wasn't it Oscar Wilde who said, "Politics - the career of scoundrels". So what justice may we expect!!

*Mary*

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**'Stories of Ireland'**

Literature, History, Culture

School of English  
The Queen's University of Belfast

*30th June - 4th July 1997*

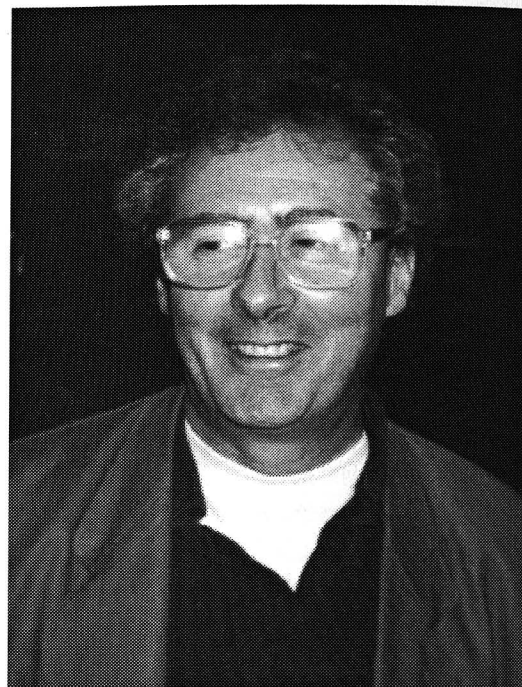
Speakers include: Paul Bew, Christopher Havie,  
Joep Leerssen, Anne Rigney  
Enquiries: 01232-335103

## A View from the Chair

Following the recent BAIS Elections, the new Council consists of a core of working members from the previous Council plus a welcome addition of new talent. We hope that this addition of new blood will enhance the ability of the council to manage the affairs of the Association and to function as a development-orientated body.

The outgoing Council attempted, with considerable success to identify and deliver programmes a) to support those involved in Irish Studies b) to rebuild and retain the membership of the Association, and c) to establish procedures which would enable the Association to function effectively. Membership has increased steadily during the past eighteen months. Delivery of services to members has focused on the successful upgrading of the *Newsletter*, the bulk purchase and distribution of *Irish Studies Review* to members, and a programme of lectures and conferences consisting of the 1995 Biennial Irish Studies Conference and two series of BAIS lectures (delivered, respectively, in Sunderland, London and Manchester). The day-conference planned by the out-going Council took place in the Irish Centre, Hammersmith, London, on 21 September, and was a highly successful and enjoyable event; and the incoming Council now undertakes responsibility for the 1997 BAIS Biennial Irish Studies Conference. It will also see to completion of the publication of a register of members' research and teaching interests, a project initiated by the previous Council.

On the other hand, there are limitations to what an organisation run on a purely voluntary basis can do. It was for this reason that Council decided to employ a Membership Administrator on a part-time basis. It also attempted to increase the capacity of the organisation through co-option of members to Standing Committees and requests for volunteers. To date, both these strategies have been successful only in a limited way. A widely-held view among members of the outgoing Council was that a higher level of membership participation, via Standing Committees and skills-based volunteering would be beneficial to the Association; and this is obviously an issue which the incoming



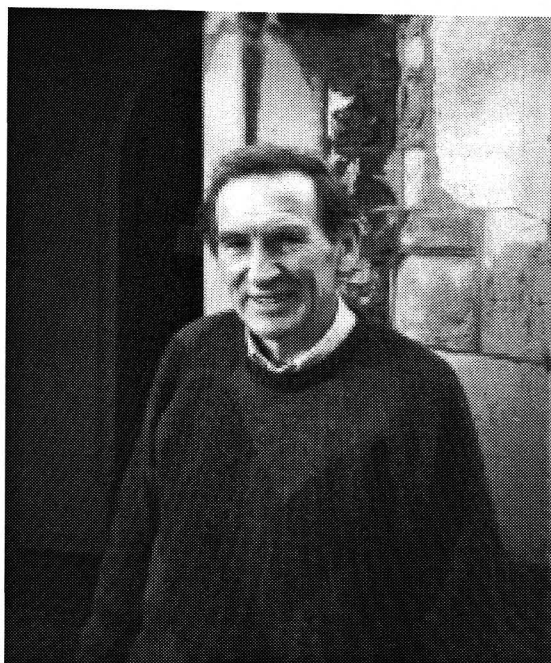
Council will have to consider.

Incoming Council will also - as part of its forward planning - have to review the effectiveness of all aspects of the Association's activities, and the extent to which these relate to the expectations of the members and the aims and objectives of BAIS. To assist this process we are carrying out a survey of members. We hope that there will be a high level of response to the questionnaire which can be found in the centre pages of this issue of the Newsletter.

Much of the efforts of the outgoing Council was, perforce, focused on putting appropriate structures in place to meet the administrative needs of the Association in its current phase. Incoming Council will reap the benefits of this work in terms of a greater ability to consider strategic development in line with the aims and objectives of the BAIS.

*Seán Hutton*

## Treasurer's Report



the Ireland Fund of Great Britain and the Irish Youth Foundation, donated in connection with the famine project.

Membership continues to revive, though rather more slowly perhaps than had been hoped for, with twenty-three new members registered in the period from 1 April to 30 September. However, as this period covered the quiet summer months, we may experience a significant pick up in the second half of the year. Membership subscriptions at £20 or £12 must represent an outstanding bargain, bringing with them, as they do, an entitlement to four issues of *Irish Studies Review* and two issues of the vibrant, up to the minute *Newsletter*. Surely we all have a few more friends with an eye to a bargain?

***Domhnall Mac Suibhne***

I am pleased to be able to report a financial success for the first BAIS conference with which I, as Treasurer, have been associated.

Total paying attendance at the Hammersmith conference was some 100 persons, producing an income of £1900. In addition, there was a small profit from the sale of Declan Kiberd's paperback book, *Inventing Ireland*, and from the wine bar. The accounts are not yet finalised, but it looks as if the final profit will be approximately £450. When the subvention of £250 generously provided by Irish Permanent is taken into account, it is clear that the organisers, speakers and audience all deserve congratulations for a most useful contribution to BAIS funds.

At the end of September, the bank balance (excluding the separate Irish Language account) stood at approximately £26,000, but outstanding bills are expected to reduce this by some £400. There is also a further liability of £2,750 in respect of grants from



## New Faces and Goodbye Tom

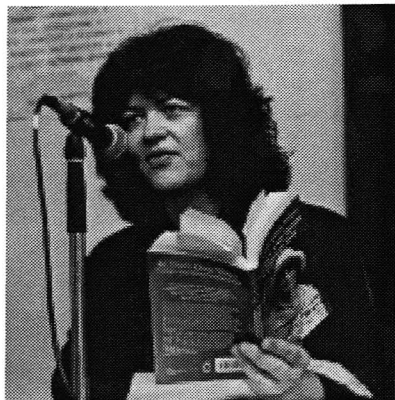


Photo: Sass Tuffin

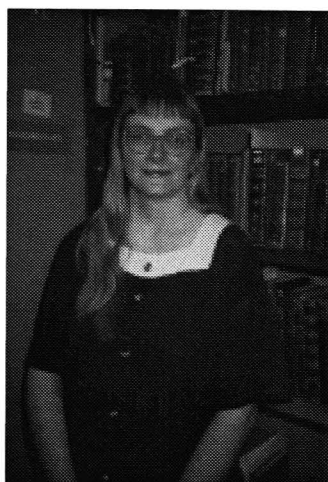
*Above: Margaret Ward was duly elected as Vice -Chair of the Association at the elections last July. Her work on Irish women's history has justly received much praise and she makes a prestigious addition to the Council line up.*



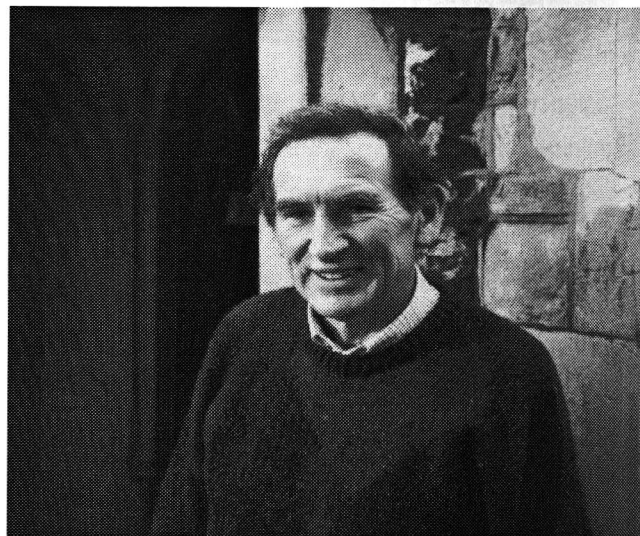
*Below: Margaret Ward presents Tom Dooley (out -going Treasurer) with a Waterford Crystal bowl as a token of the Association's appreciation for all his hard work in his time of office. Domhnall Mac Suibhne (L) and Mary Doran (R) were among other BAIS council members who met up with Tom for a valedictory meal in London in August .*



*Left: Marie Ryan was elected to the BAIS Council while studying for an Irish Studies degree at St Mary's University College, Strawberry Hill. Second generation Marie put a successful career as an executive PA on hold to return to university. She combines a busy schedule with occasional work at the Grange Community Museum in Neasden and relaxes playing her squeeze box concertina.*



*Left: Mary Doran was elected to the BAIS Council and joined the newly-formed editorial group of the Newsletter in February. She has a degree in Library and Information Studies from UCD and is a librarian at the British Library. She is responsible for the Modern Irish Collection and the new Portico Web Site (see p.19)*



*Domhnall Mac Suibhne: New BAIS Honorary Treasurer*

## Inventing Ireland: Hammersmith Conference

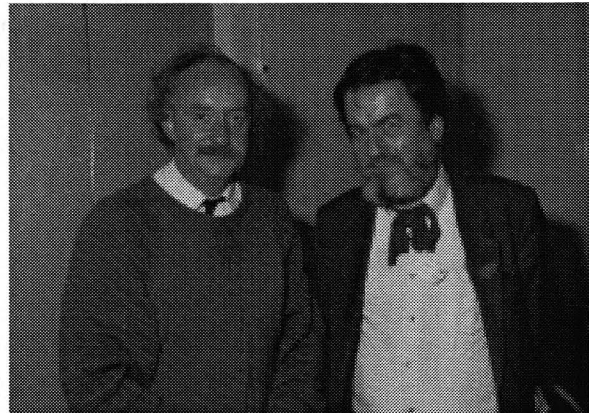
Over a hundred participants attended the BAIS day conference held at the new Irish Centre in Hammersmith, London, on 21 September 1996. The majority came from the London area but some came from far afield including Wales, Scotland, Ireland and even Finland.

After a lively and informative AGM, and a break for coffee, a panel of three speakers explored the ways in which history, feminism and literature have contributed to the invention of modern Ireland. Mary Harris from University College Galway gave a far-ranging and fascinating paper on 'Invention, Dissension and the Creation of a Modern Ireland'. This was followed by Margaret Ward of Bath College of Higher Education, who provided a vivid picture of Sinn Féin's early days and the struggle of its female members to be treated equally in her paper, 'A very Masculine Invention: the feminist/nationalist dialogue in the days of the *Irish Citizen*'. Liam Harte of St Mary's University College, Strawberry Hill, maintained the very high standard and concluded the session from a literary standpoint with 'Heterodox Imaginings: Versions of Irishness in recent Irish writings'. A brief discussion ensued.



Margaret Ward: rigorous paper, relaxed style

Then a delicious and greatly appreciated cold lunch of stuffed chicken gelatine, quiche and a variety of salads and desserts was served by the aptly named caterer, 'Food for Thought'.



Opposites Attract: Debaters Declan Kiberd (L) and Owen Dudley Edwards (R)

The focal point of the day was the debate based on Declan Kiberd's book *Inventing Ireland*, which had inspired the theme of the conference. With characteristic proficiency he proposed the motion, 'The role of writers in the invention of Ireland has been gravely under-estimated by politicians and historians'.

In the style of the famous orators of the past, Owen Dudley Edwards of Edinburgh University skilfully opposed the motion with wit and panache. Their seconders were respectively Margaret Llewellyn Jones of the University of North London and John Newsinger of Bath College of Higher Education. Then there was plenty of time for everyone to put in their two pennyworth. Not being black and white enough, the motion was a tricky one and it was evident that much debating practice is needed to revive this noble and valuable art. Finally the Chair, Lance Pettitt of St Mary's University College, brought the discussion to a close by inviting the leading protagonists to sum up. A vote was taken and, with one abstention, the motion was narrowly carried by one.

A pause for tea and a last opportunity to browse at Green Ink's bookstall before settling down to be entertained by Madeleine Casey and her literature class from Hammersmith Irish Studies group. They read extracts from *John Bull's Other Island*, Bernard Shaw's attempt at interpreting his own country to his fellow countrymen. They started with Larry Doyle and Tom Broadbent in London and, as in a good radio play, the characters and their surroundings came vividly into focus in the mind's eye of the audience. With a hat to aid her change of sex, Broadbent's performance was outstanding. Brief musical interludes played by Patricia McGloin on a variety of instruments to replace the curtain between scenes was an inspired touch. As an epilogue Frances Quinn gave a brilliant speech from *The Beauty Queen of Leenane*, by Martin McDonagh, portraying the home-bound daughter left behind to look after her infirm and demanding, crotchety, old mother. An ideal end to a stimulating day that appeared to be much enjoyed by all.

We would like to thank all those who contributed to its success, including those not mentioned above: the Irish Permanent whose generosity covered the speakers' travelling expenses; Sandy Trott who staffed the door so efficiently and coped with selling the paperback edition of *Inventing Ireland*, hot off the press, as well as the registrations; Ros Scanlon and her team at the Irish Centre who made us so welcome, including inviting all who attended the conference to their ceilidh that evening at half price.

*Eleanor Burgess*



*Members of the Council snapped by Terry Smith before the AGM:*

*Back L to R: Madeleine Casey, Mervyn Busteed, Bob Bell, Eleanor Burgess, Domhnall Mac Suibhne, Marie Ryan, Tom Dooley*

*Front L to R: Margaret Ward, Seán Hutton, Cait Thompson, Lance Pettitt, Mary Doran*



# BRITISH ASSOCIATION FOR IRISH STUDIES

Recent months have seen a considerable increase in the membership of the Association and the Council feels that it is therefore a good time to investigate what services our members would most like to see BAIS providing. We should be grateful therefore if you could take time to complete this short questionnaire. Your answers will be a useful guide when arranging future events and publications. All the responses will be placed in a draw and the winner will be entitled to a year's free subscription to BAIS and will also receive a book token for twenty pounds.

Where alternatives are presented, please tick the relevant answer, ticking more than once if that seems appropriate.

## SECTION A

Are you or were you professionally involved in Irish studies ? Yes ..... No .....

If as a teacher, at what level ?

Primary .....

or, as a student?

Secondary .....

Further .....

Further .....

Higher .....

Higher .....

Name of your institution .....

If not as a teacher or student, then in what capacity? .....

Are you a retired person? .....

Are you currently unemployed? .....

## SECTION B

Where do your major interests in Irish Studies lie?

THE MODERN IRISH LANGUAGE Yes ..... No .....

LITERATURE IN THE IRISH LANGUAGE Yes ..... No .....

Old Irish .....

Middle Irish .....

Modern Irish .....

LITERATURE IN THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE Yes ..... No .....

16th - 18th century .....

1800 - 1880 .....

1880 - 1920 .....

1920 - 1950 .....

1950 to present day .....

Whether in Irish or English are your literary interests in:

Poetry .....

Theatre .....

Fiction .....

Other (specify) .....

Any particular writers or genres .....

HISTORY Yes ..... No .....

Early .....

Medieval .....

16th century .....

17th century .....

18th century .....

19th century .....

1900 - 1950 .....

1950 to present .....

Topic(s) of special interest to you (eg Grattan's Parliament, The Land Question, Diaspora Studies etc.)

.....

.....

.....

## WOMEN'S STUDIES

What aspects interest you? .....

.....

**MUSIC**

Yes ..... No .....

If so, of what type(s) and period(s) ? .....

**VISUAL ARTS**

Yes ..... No .....

If so, of what type and period(s)? .....

**CINEMA**

Yes ..... No .....

If so, any special interests? .....

**GEOGRAPHY**

Yes ..... No .....

If so, what aspects .....

**ARCHAEOLOGY**

Yes ..... No .....

If so, what aspects .....

**ECONOMICS**

Yes ..... No .....

If so, any particular aspects? .....

**SOCIOLOGY RELATED TO IRISH ISSUES**

Yes ..... No .....

If so, any particular interest(s)? .....

**POLITICS AND CURRENT AFFAIRS**

Yes ..... No .....

**OTHER AREAS OF INTEREST** .....

**SECTION C - EVENTS**

Are you interested in attending any of the following concerned with Irish studies ?

Two or three day conferences ..... One day conferences or workshops .....

Single lectures or seminars followed by discussion .....

Travelling Exhibitions .....

Specify any other possible type of event .....  
.....  
.....

Have you attended BAIS event(s) in the past ? Yes ..... No .....  
If so, what kind and where ? .....  
.....  
.....

The large city(ies) usually most convenient for you as a venue .....

Do you attend other events related to Irish studies not arranged by BAIS ? Yes ..... No .....

If so, what kind of events ? And organised by whom? .....  
.....  
.....  
.....

## SECTION D - PUBLICATIONS AND OTHER SERVICES

All members receive copies of *Irish Studies Review* Have you any comments on its current content and format? .....  
.....  
.....  
.....

You also receive the *BAIS Newsletter*. What seems to you its most useful feature(s)? .....  
.....  
.....  
.....

Is there any way in which you would like to see the *Newsletter* developed ? .....  
.....  
.....  
.....

Any other comment on the two publications .....  
.....  
.....  
.....

What other periodical publications related to Irish studies do you read regularly? .....  
.....  
.....  
.....

Would any of the following be likely to prove useful to you?  
Specialist Bibliographies ..... Teaching Packs ..... Publisher or Bookshop catalogues .....  
Research Indexes .....



Comment .....

Is there any other type of publication that you would like to see BAIS producing or circulating ? .....

Are there any other services that you would like to see BAIS providing ? .....

## SECTION E

Any other general comments about BAIS that you wish to make? .....

In order to 'profile' our membership a little more accurately, we would be grateful if you could indicate to which of the following age groups you belong.

Under 20 ..... 20 - 29 ..... 30 - 49 ..... 50 - 64 ..... 65 and over .....

Are you male ..... female .....

How did you first hear about BAIS? .....

Your name and address for the prize draw. ....

Many thanks for your help. Please send this questionnaire to:  
**Bob Bell, 3 Hill Rd, London NW8 9QE**  
**to arrive by 31<sup>st</sup> March 1997 at the latest.**

# **BAIS National Council**

## **Principal Officers**

### **CHAIR**

**Seán Hutton**, 69 Balfour Street, London SE17 1PL Tel: 0171- 916 2733 (work) Fax: 0171-916 2753

### **VICE CHAIR**

**Dr Margaret Ward**, Bath College of Higher Education, Newton Park, Bath BA2 9BN  
Tel: 01225-873701 Fax: 01225-872912

### **HONORARY SECRETARY**

**Mervyn Busteed**, Department of Geography, University of Manchester, Manchester M13 9PL  
Tel: 0161-275 3623 Fax: 0161-273 4407

### **HONORARY TREASURER**

**Domhnall Mac Suibhne**, 53a Hartham Road, London N7 9JJ Tel: 0171-607 7771

## **Other Members of the Council**

**Dr Bob Bell**, 3 Hill Road, London NW8 9QE Tel: 0171-286 6072

**Eleanor Burgess**, Mulberries, Boreham, Chelmsford, Essex CM3 3DS Tel: 01245-467287

**Madeleine Casey**, Akaroa, Thistleworth Marine, Railshead Road, Isleworth TW7 7BY  
Tel: 0181-568-5100

**Nessan Danaher**, Irish Studies Workshop, Soar Valley College, Gleneagles Avenue, Leicester LE4 7GY Tel: 01162-875368

**Mary Doran**, Modern Irish Collections, The British Library, Great Russell Street, London WC1B 3DG Tel: 0171-412 7710

**Prof Frank Neal**, Dept of Business and Management Studies, University of Salford, Salford M5 4WT  
Tel: 0161-745 5920 Fax: 0161-745 5556

**Dr Lance Pettitt**, St Mary's University College, Waldegrave Road, Strawberry Hill, Twickenham TW1 4SX  
Tel: 0181-240 4090 Fax: 0181-240 4255 e-mail: [pettittl@smuc.ac.uk](mailto:pettittl@smuc.ac.uk)

**Marie Ryan**, 89 Everton Drive, Stanmore, Middlesex HA7 1EA Tel: 0181-206 0748

**Dr Neil Sammells**, Bath College of Higher Education, Newton Park, Bath BA2 9BN Tel: 01225-873701

**Dr Paul Stewart**, Business School, University of Wales Cardiff, Aberconway Building, Colum Drive, Cardiff CE1 3EU  
Tel: 01222-874000

**Caít Thompson**, 17 Mill Close, Braunston, Northants NN11 7HY Tel: 01788- 891494

**EUROPEAN STUDIES RESEARCH INSTITUTE  
Centre for Contemporary History and Politics  
University of Salford**

**THE BRITISH ASSOCIATION FOR IRISH STUDIES  
INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE**

**The Irish in Britain**

**5th - 7th September 1997**

**INFORMATION AND FIRST CALL FOR PAPERS**

The British Association for Irish Studies will be holding its Sixth Biennial Conference at the European Studies Research Institute, University of Salford, on 5th - 7th September 1997.

This will be a multi-disciplinary conference with the theme *The Irish in Britain*. It is hoped to include not only academic papers but also workshops, discussion groups, dramatic presentations, musical entertainment and field excursions to places of Irish interest in the Manchester and Liverpool areas. Contributions towards a bilingual session on the Irish language would be welcome.

Colleagues wishing to propose a paper or make a presentation should send a 300 word abstract for consideration by **Friday 15 March 1997** to:

**Professor Frank Neal,  
European Studies Research Institute,  
Crescent House, University of Salford, Salford M5 4WT**

**Tel: 0161-745 5920/5614 Fax: 0161-745 5556**



## Irish Language Report

Kate Thompson reports that the work of the sub-committee has been held up by the disruption caused by her moving house. Her written report to the council in November noted that the Irish Language Standing Committee would soon be more active. Among planned activities are the publication of a newsletter, discussion of the latest Socrates/Lingua material with a view to applying for funding for new projects, and arrangements for a centre which will store resources and information for the use of teachers.

She also reports that letters have been sent to Irish language teachers in Britain informing them that Irish language examinations developed with ITÉ, with funding support from the Ireland Fund of Great Britain, are now available.

Kate also reports that she has met with Fírinne Ní Chréachtáin and Tomás Mac Stiofáin to discuss the development of Irish language activities. While it has not been possible to include an article in Irish in this Newsletter, we are actively seeking suitable material for future issues.

## Fo Choist Na Gaeilge

Ní Raibhe an bhliain atá thart chomh gníomhach le blianta eile ós rud é go rabhamar ag aistriú ti ach táimid faoi lánseol aris agus a' tnúth le sárobair a chur chun criche.

Cuirimíde fáilte roimh bheirt a bhéas a tabhairt lámh chuidithe dúinn - Fírinne Ní Chréachtáin as Baile Atha Cliath/Londain agus Tomás Mac Stiofáin as Tuaim/Londain.

I measc na nimeachtaí atá beartaithe tá Nuachtlitir le foilsíu gan mhoill eolas faoi scrúdaithe I.T.E. le scaipeadh, cuir isteach ar airgead ón Eoraip le múinteoirí a sheoladh trasna go hÉirinn, comhdháil a thionáí san Earrach agus ionad buan a sholáthar le áiseanna a chur ar fáil do Ghaeilgeoirí.

Cé nach feidir alt as Gaeilge a chur san eagrán seo den Nuachtlitir ní hé sin le rá nach mbeimid a lorg agus a cur fáilte roimh ábhair oiriúnacha as Gaeilge sa todhchal.

*Caít Thompson*

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### MAKING CONNECTIONS: IRELAND AND THE DIASPORA SOCIAL, CULTURAL AND POLITICAL PERSPECTIVES

*A two day international conference at the University of Central Lancashire, Preston  
6-7 JUNE 1997*

#### CALL FOR PAPERS

This is an interdisciplinary conference which aims to attract post-graduates, academics and members of the wider community who have an interest in Irish Studies. We are inviting proposals for papers, drawing on historical or contemporary perspectives, including for example: Irish Culture and Literature, The Irish Language, The Peace Process, Feminism and the Women's Movement, Emigration Irish/British Relations, Irish People in Britain

*Invited Speakers include:*

Liz Curtis (*Nothing but the Same Old Story* and *The Cause of Ireland*)

Jonathan Tonge (Salford University)

John Newsinger (Bath College of Higher Education)

Contact: Louise Ryan, Department of Social Studies or John Shaw, Department of Languages  
University of Central Lancashire, Preston PR1 2HE. Tel: 01772 - 893982/893130

Contributors should submit abstracts (200 words) by 15th March 1997

## Van the Man in Bath

### **IRISH ENCOUNTERS CONFERENCE**

**Bath College of Higher Education 5-6 July 1996**

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Much praise is due to Bath's energetic group of academics for putting together a first class weekend in the picturesque setting of Newton Park campus. Some ninety delegates were welcomed by Neil Sammells (Dean of the Faculty of Arts) just after lunch on Friday. Terry Eagleton's keynote address

against culture, Eagleton qualified himself by saying that he did not dismiss culture but that it was 'not important in the first place' and added that 'because something was not central did not mean that it does not matter'.

In contrast to Eagleton's lecture, Joanna Bourke's keynote, 'Masculinity in Irish History', was presented in a more straightforward, less compact and accessible style. Acknowledging



Margaret Ward and Van Morrison pictured enjoying the conference dinner

'The Ideology of Irish Studies' began with the contention that 'Irish Studies is a curious cross-breed of liberal humanism and post modernism'. He proceeded to offer a critique of both components from an assertive, Marxist perspective. Eagleton directed most of his attack at what he called 'dogmatic, universalist post modernist culturalism' in its readings of Ireland and Irish culture, questioning the notion that being in a minority or existing on the margins was inherently creative.

Indeed, Eagleton asserted that he felt too much emphasis had been put on the cultural in Irish Studies and not enough on the material, economic conditions that obtained in Ireland. Asked what he had

the importance of feminist historians, her research was motivated by the problem of how we might write a gendered history of Ireland where men's roles were investigated in a theoretically alert way. She outlined the task of examining how Irish men's lives were defined and continually negotiated in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Drawing on a fascinating combination of sources, including diaries, letters and official reports, she pointed out how Irish masculinity could be defined by demographic factors and the specific contexts of home, employment and military life. She concentrated her remarks on men from the rural parts of Ireland. Bourke made the point that while an understanding

*Continued on Page 23*

## Salford Seminar Series

### UNDERSTANDING THE PEACE PROCESS IN IRELAND

Earlier this year, Salford University staged a major seminar series entitled *Understanding the Peace Process in Ireland*, involving ten weeks of presentations from some influential politicians and academics, several directly involved in the process. Hundreds of students attended the event, organised by the European Studies Research Institute - a demonstration of the interest in resolving conflict in Ireland.

Opinion was divided over prospects for a lasting peace. PUP leader, David Ervine, made the most conciliatory noises concerning peace talks, whilst emphasising that as he was "the British presence in Ireland", he and other loyalists would not be forcibly expelled into a united Ireland. Professor Steve Bruce of the University of Aberdeen suggested that the fringe loyalist parties would struggle to make an impact in the forthcoming peace elections, and in any case would find it difficult to persuade loyalist paramilitaries of the value of maintaining the cease-fire.

DUP leader in Derry, Councillor Gregory Campbell, denounced republicans for living in a "1918 timewarp" (the occasion of the last all-Ireland elections). Campbell, security spokesperson for the DUP, rejected equivalent criticisms concerning Orangeism's 1690 celebrations.

SDLP economic spokesperson, Sean Farren, insisted that his Party's stress upon intergovernmental agreement, and the need for an Irish dimension in any settlement, had been vindicated. This view had the sympathy of Professor Brendan O'Leary of the London School of Economics. Professor O'Leary, a previous adviser to Shadow Northern Ireland Secretary, Mo Mowlam, quit the Labour Party in protest at its bipartisan approach to the peace process. Labour policy was defended by its front bench spokesman, Eric Illsley, who insisted that the Conservative Government had shifted its approach towards Labour Policy. The MP conceded, however, that Labour was "no longer a persuader for a united Ireland, but a facilitator".

Sponsored by grants from the European Union and the Ireland Fund of Great Britain, the seminar series prompted frank debate on the future of Ulster. The largest student fact-finding mission to Ireland ever undertaken was run in conjunction with the series. 73 students met the Ulster Unionists, SDLP, Sinn Fein and the Alliance Party in Belfast, before attending the Sinn Fein Ard Fheis in Dublin.

Meanwhile, plans are already afoot for a follow-up to recent events. The University plans to stage a special one-day conference on *Paths to Peace in Ireland* in November, and hopes to attract more of the leading politicians in Northern Ireland.

*Jon Tonge*

The Irish Studies Centre recently published the proceedings of a conference that it held last year under the title of *Northern Ireland: What Next?* This booklet, edited by Mary Hickman, stands as a record of most of the speeches and papers by the major contributors at the conference. The ISC has also published a useful resource in the *Irish Studies Teaching Pack*.

For further details please contact: Tony Murray, Irish Studies Centre,  
University of North London, 166-220 Holloway Road, London N7 8DB  
Tel: 0171-753-5018 Fax: 0171-753-7069

## Irish Web in the British Library

Mary Doran reports that she is working on text that outlines the British Library's Twentieth Century Irish collection of books, pamphlets and periodicals for the Library's world wide web site PORTICO. The text for the web site should be ready for access in Spring 1997 and will be a valuable resource for researchers in a number of disciplines. An article on this project will appear in the BAIS Newsletter No 11.



## More seating! Success at UNL

### University of North London: Public Lecture Series

The Irish Studies Centre continued its very popular programme of free public lectures this autumn at the Holloway Road campus. The calibre of invited speakers was maintained with Professor J.J. Lee, University College, Cork, who reviewed the Republic of Ireland's membership of the European Union. Two weeks later, Professor Roy Foster, Hertford College, Oxford, who is writing the authorised biography of W.B. Yeats, spoke to a packed hall on '*W.B. Yeats: Theatre and Revolution*'. In early December, Bernadette McAliskey, Human Rights Activist, concluded the series by an assessment of the Northern Ireland Peace Process asking 'Who is Negotiating What and on Whose Behalf?'

The questions and debate following Professor Foster's lecture were firmly and fairly chaired by Director of the Irish Studies Centre, Dr Mary Hickman. Members of the audience then enjoyed a wine reception where more informal debate and networking took place. The Centre has committed itself to offering an on-going forum in



*Roy Foster and Mary Hickman at the University of North London*

which issues about Northern Ireland can be discussed and in future years at least one lecture in a series will address this subject according to Dr Hickman.

**Lance Pettitt**

### Bowen at Goldsmiths

A one-day conference on Elizabeth Bowen titled 'London, Ireland and Modernism' was held at Goldsmith's College, New Cross, in London just before Christmas. Speakers included Andrew Burnett, Julia Briggs, Claire Connelly, Renée Hoagland, Max Saunders, Ingrid Thowsen and Eibhear Walshe. The event was organised by Jean Radford and Jane Desmarais (Goldsmiths) in conjunction with the Department of English, University College Cork. It followed on the success of the previous year's conference focussing on Beckett in London.

### European Federation of Associations and Centres of Irish Studies

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Organisers: Paul Brennan, Marguerite Corish, Claude Fierobe, Christophe Gillissen, Catherine Piola, Sabine Sharkey.

For further information contact: Christophe Gillissen, 32  
Résidence du Parc d'Ardenay, 91120 Palaiseau, France

## **The North-West's Awake!**

**T**he *Newsletter* is happy to report on three different developments in Irish Studies that have sprung up in the North West of England since the last issue.

### **PRESTON COLLEGE**

Preston College is now running an Open College/Stage B course in Irish Studies. The course material was put together after Liz Ronane had discussed her idea with Alastair Wilcox, Head of History at the college. The course was successfully validated this summer and enrolled its first cohort of fifteen students this autumn.

The course is organised over twenty-one weeks, aiming to introduce students to Irish Studies as an interdisciplinary subject and spans a broad range of topics including Early Irish History, Rural Society, Nationalism and Unionism, a Literature element that comprises a selection of drama, fiction and poetry in English, and Irish Music. The target group for the course is mature students who, on completing the course in 1997, will be encouraged to apply for higher education degrees in Irish Studies or use their qualification to study related disciplines such as History, Sociology, Politics or Race and Ethnic Studies. The University of Central Lancashire, Edge Hill University College and the Institute of Irish Studies at the University of Liverpool are said to be extremely enthusiastic about this development in Irish Studies.

Lancashire has a long history of providing work for Irish emigrants whose families have integrated with the local population. The course is one kind of response to the substantial growth in the numbers of British-born Irish who have expressed a desire to investigate the social and economic developments that placed them here as an aid to understanding their own cultural identity. Liz Ronane reports that most of the present group 'generally come from Irish backgrounds' but that people with no Irish family connections are also encouraged to enrol.

**For more information call  
Liz on 01772-772200 Ext 2287**

### **IRISH INITIATIVE AT UNIVERSITIES OF KEELE AND STAFFORDSHIRE**

This year has seen the formation of a new Irish Studies initiative based at the Universities of Keele and Staffordshire. Created in response to the numerous recent appointments in the area of Irish Studies at both institutions, the group has eleven members drawn from disciplines as diverse as English and Geography, American Studies and History. Academics involved in the project include the historians Virginia Crossman and Charles Townsend, the literary and cultural critics Scott Brewster, Edward Larrissy, Fiona Beckett, Gary Kelly and David Alderson and the geographers Steve Mills and Liz Young. The group is designed to draw together the research activities of its members and provide a forum for new interdisciplinary work. At present the group runs a seminar programme, co-ordinates research degrees, and is planning a new MA, jointly administered by the two universities, for 1997.

The inaugural event for the group was held back in May. Professor Roy Foster was the speaker and his paper, entitled 'Waiting for the Millennium: W.B. Yeats and Irish Nationalism in the 1890s', drew on his current research project, the authorised biography of Yeats. The group has now secured funding which will allow it to develop a full programme of visiting speakers during 1996-97. It also has links with the new North West Irish Cultural Studies Seminar convened by Michael Parker at Liverpool Hope University College.

Irish Studies at Keele and Staffordshire is jointly run by Shaun Richards at Staffordshire (Tel: 01782-294521) and Richard Kirkland at Keele (Tel: 01782-583145).

Further information about the group's activities can be found at its web site: <http://www.keele.ac.uk/depts/en/irish.htm>.

(Continued on p.23)

***Lance Pettitt***

## Gorey Conference

The first Byrne/Perry Summer School was held in 1995 as Gorey's contribution to the debate about the events and the significance of 1798, which its imminent bicentenary will inevitably bring forth. It was named after two historical figures from the Gorey area: Miles Byrne, a key participant in the rebellion, who eventually became a general in the French army, and Anthony Perry, a founder member of the United Irishmen in Wexford, who was executed in Edenderry in 1798. They both feature in the Four Courts Press publication, *The Mighty Wave*, which contains papers delivered at the first Summer School. It is edited by Daire Keogh, the school's director, and Nicholas Furlong, President of the Wexford Historical Society.

As a result of the Summer School's success the committee decided to reconvene it, this time with the theme 'The Women of '98'. I was very fortunate to be asked to give a paper on aristocratic women's reactions to the events, for the whole weekend was a most stimulating and enjoyable experience. The involvement of so many local people was particularly striking and heart-warming. With some of the speakers I was put up at Glenbowser House, a luxurious guest house, where we were warmly welcomed and cared for by its proprietors, the O'Donnells. Their delicious breakfasts set us up well for the day ahead.

On the Friday evening, after an introduction by the Chairman, The Rev Walter Forde, the Minister of the Environment, Brendan Howlin, who happened to be a Wexford man, officially opened the Summer School. He was followed by Albert Reynolds who had flown in by helicopter from a family wedding in Mayo to give the first Gordon Wilson Memorial Lecture, which is to be an annual event. The former Taoiseach neatly combined the past and the present by interweaving the '98 with his memories of Gordon Wilson, whose elevation to the Senate he had instigated, and his own part in brokering the IRA ceasefire along with his views on the subsequent handling of the situation.

The Saturday sessions started with my paper entitled 'Lord Edward's Aunt: how Louisa Connolly and her sisters faced '98'. Then Kevin O'Neill of Boston College spoke on Mary Leadbetter and '98. The second session comprised John Grey of the Linenhall Library, Belfast, on Mary Anne McCracken, and John Beatty of Fort Wayne Library, Indiana, on 'Women Loyalist Narratives of '98'.

After lunch Dr N F Lowe from Dublin presented his paper 'Mary Wollstonecraft - Radical Feminist and the 1970s', and Dr Irene Countess Montjoye, co-founder of the Austrian Society of 18th

Century Studies spoke about Lady Pamela Fitzgerald and her connections to central Europe.

Any spare time could be spent viewing the various art exhibitions and an intriguing historical one organised by Michael Fitzpatrick. Prizes for a very interesting display of school projects were presented by Ivan Yates, the Minister for Agriculture, also from Wexford, after he had launched *The Mighty Wave* mentioned above.

The Loch Garman Arms Hotel where the lectures were held also produced a magnificent buffet dinner, beautifully set out, of cold salmon, meats and salads followed by the famous Wexford strawberries and cream. We then repaired to the Gorey Little Theatre where we could relax and enjoy 'Heather Blazing', brilliant cabaret presentations of the songs and stories of 1798.

Sunday morning was devoted to a panel discussion on women in contemporary Ireland lead by Mary Holland, Mags O'Brien and Mary Kenny. In the afternoon we boarded a bus and set out for Vinegar Hill with John Cleary as our guide. His local knowledge and enthusiasm brought the countryside and the events of 1798 to life, as en route, he pointed out the relevant sites. From the top of Vinegar Hill we looked down on Enniscorthy and the scene of the battle. We left with a vivid picture and detailed understanding of every phase of that fateful 21st June nearly two centuries ago. On the way back we made a small detour to Ballymore, belonging to the Donovan family. In a beautiful setting, it has a long history and visitors are invited to tour the grounds via the church, graveyard, holy well and castle mound to the museum and picture gallery in the stable yard. Tea and delicious cakes served in the reconstructed greenhouse were very welcome.

It was a very full weekend and time is needed to digest all we have learnt and experienced. The convenors had certainly once again been successful. New dimensions, new ways of thinking about those historic days and their significance had been opened up. But as I drove over Mount Leinster to Kilkenny my foremost feeling was gratitude for the warm and outgoing friendliness of all the people of Gorey who had put so much into the weekend. For two days I had had the pleasure of being part of the place.

*Eleanor Burgess*



## **Van the Man in Bath**

*Continued from Page 17*

of women's history was vital to inject into the practices of Irish historiography, she felt that men's history must not be allowed to evade the implications of gender analysis; Irish masculinity needed to be subjected to the same rigours of academic examination.

Over fifty papers were delivered in the course of the weekend in the form of parallel workshops. It was impossible for even the keenest of delegates to take in all of them. Papers that stood out amongst those of a very high standard for this particular delegate (who, for transport reasons, had to leave at 4 pm on Saturday) were those given by Barry Sloan and Sarah Ferris on Ulster protestant autobiography and John Hewitt respectively, Matthew Campbell's 'Allingham in England' and Ellen Raissa Jackson on Friel and Lockhead's drama. Stephen Reagan spoke well on Renan, Arnold and Yeats and Ronan McDonald's paper on Synge and Cultural History was packed with ideas. Ashley Trellis gave a succinct elucidation of McGuckian's poetry and Graham Dawson a thoughtful paper on William Trevor. This is a purely personal, highly selective list and does not pretend to be a comprehensive overview.

Check out the conference programme for details of the papers given if you were not at the conference. A feature that is worth mentioning was the relaxed nature of the workshops and the openness of the discussion that followed the presentations. My impression is that the conference organisers successfully put together a diverse set of papers, argued from a wide range of theoretical positions, which focused on the cultural aspects of Irish Studies. Does this confound or confirm the qualified thesis of Eagleton's keynote?

The spirit of participation was carried through into the evening's conference dinner. Not content with simply giving the keynote, the Oxford Professor later sang for his supper to prove that he knew a bit about popular culture. Who knows what the mysterious guest figure of Van Morrison thought of all this?

The organisers could usefully produce a collection of papers from the proceedings and add to the growing reputation that Bath College of Higher Education is gathering as a centre of Irish Studies activity in Britain.

Continued from p.21

***Lance Pettitt***

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## **Irish Studies Cultural Group**

An Irish Cultural Studies Group has recently been set up in the north west of England to provide opportunities for academics, postgraduates and people with a general interest in the field to share ideas and information. Its inaugural meeting was hosted by Michael Parker and Richard Greaves of Liverpool Hope University College on 21st November, and included two first-rate papers. Amanda Graham of Loughborough University discussed how the media, academic and at times, the author herself, had contributed to a reductive and simplistic treatment of the work of Edna O'Brien, while Richard Kirkland from Keele examined ideological slippages, elisions and revisions with the poetry and thinking of the UDA.

Liverpool, Manchester, Keele, Staffordshire and Huddersfield.

The next scheduled meeting of the group will be in late March at Staffordshire University. Anyone interested in attending or offering a paper should contact Dr Scott Brewster, Staffordshire University, College Road, Stoke-on-Trent ST4 2XW. Fax: 01782-294760

If you have information about readings, lectures, Irish Studies activities which you would like us to publicise, contact Michael Parker who will edit the group's Bulletin at Liverpool Hope. Fax: 0151-291-3160.

The informal group, which will meet twice yearly includes at present members from universities in

***Michael and Aleksandra Parker***

## Hammersmith Festival of New Irish Cinema

The 4th Festival of New Irish Cinema, held between 31st January and 2nd February, presented some excellent new films at the Riverside Studios and the Irish Centre in Hammersmith. The event was supported by the Ireland Fund of Great Britain, the Cultural Committee of the Irish Department of Foreign Affairs and the Northern Ireland Tourist Board. Rosalind Scanlon and Kieran Gilmore worked hard to attract as many of the most recent and sought after productions for a varied programme of screenings. As we have come to expect now, there was a healthy selection of short films mixed in with full-length and documentaries.

Some of the highlights for me were the Saturday night feature, *The Sun, the Moon and the Stars*, sensitively directed by Geraldine Creed, the Sunday matinee, *The Boy From Mercury*, directed skilfully by Martin Duffy, and the early Sunday evening screening of John T. Davies' autobiographical film, *Uncle Jack*. It was a deeply personal and beautifully engaging film meditation about his relationship with his uncle who inculcated a life-long obsession with flight and film-making.

This was followed later the same evening with a wholly different kind of experience: a double-bill of films taking the Hunger Strike of 1981 as their subject. The Riverside Studio cinema was packed to capacity for Stephen Burke's humorous short called '81. Terry George's, *Some Mother's Son*, released in Ireland last autumn and

winner of the Cannes audience vote, has only recently opened in Britain. The film has its problems but overall it succeeds in offering a stimulating and entertaining cinematic version of a key event in recent history that has upset both British and Republican opinion. Some achievement.

*Snakes and Ladders*, Trish McAdam's debut that featured on Friday night, was a disappointment. A slow-moving, visually uninteresting story about Dublin thirtysomethings, it viewed more like a television soap. As a result its characters didn't really engage with the intensity required for cinema and well before the end I was past caring about what happened to them.

Overall, however, the weekend is a great treat for cinephiles and I hope that the event continues to attract support. It is a pity that some films like *Trojan Eddie*, premiered at the London Film Festival in November, could not be obtained for a review, though I know that this was not for want of effort by the festival organisers.

*Lance Pettitt*

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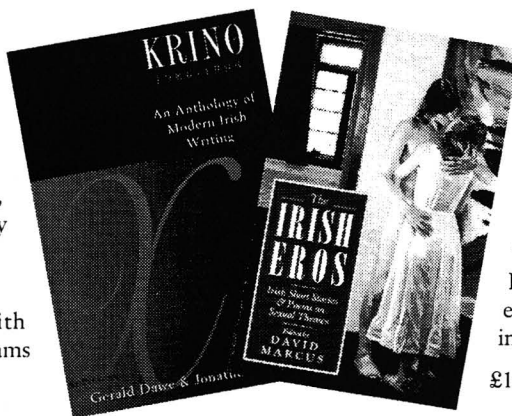
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## Contributors

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**Madeleine Casey** has taught evening classes at Hammersmith and Fulham Irish Centre and has just completed a semester as Visiting Lecturer in Irish Studies at St Mary's University College, Strawberry Hill.

**Seán Hutton** is BAIS Chair and Community Care Co-Ordinator with the Federation of Irish Societies. He writes a regular column as gaeilge for *The Irish Post* and is currently working on an essay about the fiction writing of Donal Mac Amlaigh.

**Dr Richard Kirkland** is Lecturer in English at Keele University and author of *Literature and Culture in Northern Ireland Since 1965: Moments of Danger* (Longman, 1996)

**Professor Edna Longley**, Queen's University, Belfast, is the author of *The Living Stream: Literature and Revisionism in Ireland* (Bloodaxe, 1994)

**Domhnall Mac Suibhne** is BAIS Honorary Treasurer and Treasurer of the Irish Texts Society.

**Mary** was a student on the Irish Studies course at the Centre for Extra-Mural Studies, Birkbeck College in 1996. She left Tipperary in the 1940s and came to London, where she spent her working life.

**Dr Lance Pettitt** is Senior Lecturer in Irish Studies at St Mary's University College. He is currently writing *Ireland on Screen: Film and Television Representation* for Manchester University Press.

**Dr Martin Reekes** retired from teaching through ill health in 1983. Since then he has devoted himself to researching Medieval Anglo-Irish literature and history. He was awarded his doctorate in 1994 for a thesis on the Irish elements in the work of the Gawain poet.

**Dr Shaun Richards** is Head of Literature in the School of Arts, Staffordshire University and a founder member of the BAIS. He has published widely on Irish literature and drama and co-authored *Writing Ireland* in 1988 with David Cairns.

**Liz Ronane** is a lecturer in Social Studies at Preston College. She has recently completed her M.Sc at the Institute of Irish Studies at the University of Liverpool.

**Terry Smith** is a free lance photographer who works regularly for *The Irish Post*. He may be contacted on 0181-870-0284.

**Dr Jon Tonge** lectures politics at the University of Salford. He is author of *Conflict and Change in Northern Ireland* (Prentice Hall, 1997) and co-editor (with Chris Gilligan) of *Peace or War? Understanding the Peace Process in Ireland* (Avebury, forthcoming, 1997).

**Caít Thompson** is an Irish language specialist and has served on the BAIS Language Sub-committee for a number of years.

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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 1997 at debit of my account ...

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

Signed ..... Date .....

Send this completed form to:

Mrs Sandy Trott, BAIS Membership Administrator, 20 Keats Square, South Woodham Ferrers, Essex CM3 5XZ

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**University of North London**

**Irish Studies Centre**

**Irish in Britain Research Forum**

20th February 1997

Sarah Morgan, *Irish Studies Centre*

'Drunk and Incapable? Press Representations'

27th February 1997

Dr Joseph Bradley *Glasgow Caledonian University*

'Football and the Irish in Scotland'

6th March 1997

Oonagh O'Brien *Positively Irish Action on AIDS*

'The Irish and HIV: The Mobility Project'

13th March 1997

Breda Grey *Lancaster University*

'Irish Women: Location and Identity'

All Seminars commence at 5pm in room M236

ALL WELCOME

Venue: Tower Building UNL 166-200 Holloway Road London N7 8DB

Tel: 0171-735-5018