

# British Association for Irish Studies

*Newletter*

ISSUE No 31 JULY 2002

**BATTLE IN THE BOOKS 11:**

**SIR ROGER CASEMENT  
(1864–1916)**



Courtesy: Teddy Healy, Ballyvaughan

STATUE BY OISIN KELLY (1972)  
TO OVERLOOK BANNA BEACH, CO. KERRY

**FOCUS INTERVIEW 21: DAVID MARCUS ON OUGHTO BIOGRAPHY**

**WOMEN'S WRITING AND TRADITIONS 2: A NEW CURRICULUM?**

**BURSARIES PRESENTATIONS 2002: A REPORT**

**BAIS CONFERENCE, SEPTEMBER 2002: DETAILS**

**NOTICEBOARD**

BAIS NEWSLETTER NO. 31

JULY 2002

EDITORIAL

Many thanks to this issue's contributors: to **David Marcus** and **Malcolm Ballin** for their contribution to the Focus Interview series which comes of age at 21; to **Siobhan Kilfeather** for her contribution to the Women's Writing and Traditions series, still in its tender infancy at 2; and to **Eibhlin Evans** for her report on the BAIS Bursaries presentations which was a splendid occasion at the Irish Embassy in London. My very special thanks to **Professor James Horan** from New York and **Jack Moylett** from Dublin, both of whom accepted my invitation to comment on the long running Irish saga of Casement's 'Black Diaries'. The stop press news is that this saga could well run on to reach its centenary in 2016, because the Casement's Black Diaries as genuine or forged still remains a wide open question.

Please refer to Noticeboard for details of the BAIS one day conference scheduled for Saturday 7 September 2002 at the Irish Centre Hammersmith London W6. It is now expected that a new BAIS Newsletter editor will have been found by the end of this year – that means that I will edit Issue 32 October 2002. Perhaps there might be forthcoming a Rejoinder to Battle in the Books 11, which would bring to an appropriate close my 5 year old editorship during which I have imagined the BAIS Newsletter as a small forum for cultural debate.

Copy and/or discs (Word 97) with articles, reports, notices, letters etc. to be included in No. 32 should be sent to **Jerry Nolan**, 8 Antrobus Road, Chiswick, London W4 5HY by 4 October 2002 at the very latest. Email: [Jemnolan@aol.com](mailto:Jemnolan@aol.com)

FOCUS INTERVIEW 21: DAVID MARCUS ON OUGHTTOBIOGRAPHY

*David Marcus has had a long career as a poet, a novelist, a critic, a publisher and an editor. He founded and edited Irish Writing and its sister magazine, Poetry Ireland, in the 1940s and for eighteen years (1968-86) he was the editor of the weekly 'New Irish Writing' page in the Irish Press. He became the literary editor of the Irish Press and he later helped to found Poolbeg Press. These productions all introduced large numbers of new talented Irish writers. He is married to Ita Daly, the novelist. He has recently been described, in a review of his latest book in the Times Literary Supplement, as 'Ireland's premier man of letters.' Malcolm Ballin visited David Marcus at his Dublin home to discuss his Oughttobiography: Leaves from the diary of a hyphenated Jew (Dublin, Gill and Macmillan, 2001).*

**MWB:** What were your personal relations with the Catholic culture of Ireland? You say in the book that you had no Catholic friends in your youth. You do refer to the preoccupation of the church of that time with personal morality.

**DM:** I was essentially a very private kind of person and did not experience a strong desire to have friends of any sort. It came naturally to me to live inside my mind. I was brought up in a small Jewish community in Cork – about four hundred strong, and my great interest around the age of thirteen to fourteen was playing table tennis. I started playing at the Jewish Youth club and when that closed I joined the Protestant one which was nearest to my home. I would play almost every night of the week, winter and summer, then return home at eleven for a late supper. Following that I would start writing. The emphasis of Irish Catholicism on what I call in the book 'sin, sex and soil' did not occupy my mind at all at that time. I had no girl friends, though I found girls attractive creatures. At age sixteen I left Pres. and went to University College, Cork.

**MWB:** How important to you was the fact of your being a Corkman?

**DM:** Like many smaller places in the world, Cork had something of a sense of being looked down upon by the capital city. This feeling wasn't exactly heavy and it certainly never really fazed Cork people. The government, in my early years, always appeared to pay by far its most attention to the capital – except when an election was looming. Things have got better since then. Cork people were friendly and talkative, and essentially the ethos was still that of the country, despite it being a major

commercial and industrial centre. Munster's atmosphere and values all came from farming communities. I was highly aware early on of famous literary Corkmen such as Frank O'Connor and Sean O'Faolain. Sean O'Faolain became a close personal friend to me and to my wife. He was, as I found out later, a wonderful person, one of the greatest Irishmen, articulate and a great intellectual. He was always personally helpful to me, and it was his insistence and encouragement that gave me the confidence to start *Irish Writing*.

**MWB:** There have been several recent discussions around Sean O'Faolain's contribution to Irish life. What is your view of this?

**DM:** He was among the first European thinkers in Ireland in those days, one of the first to look forward really intelligently. I link him intellectually with Conor Cruise O'Brien, especially in this connection. Some of his early novels were not very good in my opinion, but he wrote marvellous short stories. He got very frustrated by the difficulties of actually bringing about change in Irish society, given the resistance of the government and the extent to which it was in the grip of the Catholic Church. In his days in charge of the Arts Council he found dealing with the provincial attitudes of officials very difficult. Ultimately of course, towards the end of a long life, he became tired. He was very disappointed with the critical failure of his last novel, *And Again*.

**MWB:** What was the balance between your personal sense of inclusion in the Jewish community you were born into and your feelings of exclusion from the gentile world?

**DM:** I learned early about such events as *Kristallnacht* from the *Cork Examiner*. There was little obvious anti-Semitism in Cork, but I was obviously conscious of the possibility. I refer in the book to one person who opposed the idea of my producing *Irish Writing*, because she felt that, not being either Irish or a Catholic, I lacked a position from which to promote Irish writers. The same person, she being the English Literature lecturer at Cork, went on to teach my brother without there being any difficulties at all. I myself was taught history rather badly at Pres. and I have never really had much serious interest in history or current politics. I don't, for instance, now see that I can do much by getting involved in the problems of the Middle East.

**MWB:** But you still wrote novels based on the Jewish experience in Ireland.

**DM:** I did, but my Jewish novels were almost wholly imagined situations and not really autobiographical: I invented Jonathan's clash with the Catholic youth leader in *To Next Year in Jerusalem* and his relationship with his Catholic girl-friend because these things were necessary for the plot. The novel wasn't very good, in my opinion, and it made no ripples in the Jewish community that I was aware of. Within my family, my mother made very few women friends and confined herself to a busy life as a Jewish housewife. My father, on the other hand, was always deeply involved in and with communal discussion. I may have got some of my own tendency to be retiring from socialising from my mother. In any case, I divorced myself wholly from religion of any kind from about the age of ten. I didn't tell my parents that this was the case. Why should I hurt them? My three brothers all keep Jewish homes with Kosher practices, but I do not follow any form of religious observation. On the other hand, the experience I describe in the book, of meeting a woman called Hilda, working in London but born in Germany, whose whole life had been shattered by her experiences of anti-semitism, and who had become intensely anti-German as a result, made a great impression on me at the time. One has one's own morality. I make my own God but I do try to observe the biblical injunction to do unto others as you would be done unto. But how could there possibly be a God? I don't enter into controversy on this: if people have faith why should I want to destroy it? I often wish that I had faith, especially as death gets nearer and becomes more of an obsession.

**MWB:** My reading of *Oughtobiography* suggests an intriguing balance in your life between your personal modesty and what you describe in the book as 'vaulting ambition.'

**DM:** I have often had to overcome the feeling of being scared stiff. I have, for example, been very conscious of the serious deficiencies of my education in English literature. I have always been obsessed with the short story form and I have read very few of the great novels I should have, not even Jane Austen. As a consequence I did not advance my own opinions much. But I listened, listened, listened. This was not just a calculated move, designed to produce some result; it is part of my nature. My wife

has written five novels and I listen to her. My younger brother is far better read. I am, however, not really very worried about what people think of me. I think Churchill once said something about modest people having plenty to be modest about. The continuing sense of fear I experienced in my youth is not as disabling now as it once was. I used to worry desperately about taking part in an interview for a week in advance: but I had to learn to cope with it. It's just something you have to do.

**MWB:** Given your unusual background and your retiring personality, how did you manage to build such an extensive personal network among literary figures, even as a very young man?

**DM:** Call it cheek or audacity. I had nothing to lose by deciding what famous writer or critic I'd like to ask to offer a particular book or review. I'd send him or her a nice semi-begging letter – there would be a fee but it wouldn't be anywhere near their usual range – but, even so, most of them answered, some saying 'yes'. All I could lose was the cost of a stamp, and that would hardly make a dent in my budget.

**MWB:** How did you come to leave Ireland for such a long period?

**DM:** I felt to some extent confined by Ireland as a young man, but when I had got into producing *Irish Writing* I was not in any position to leave. My father had taken over responsibility for the magazine's loans and I wouldn't leave until that had been dealt with. When I did leave it was still in the hope of becoming a writer, but I was never finally convinced that I was any good at it. That was why I withdrew from the literary scene altogether for several years, and went into the insurance business in London. It was an accident really that brought me back into Irish literary life: the insurance company relocated from the centre of London and I didn't want to go with them. It was my brother who persuaded me to try another stint in Dublin, at first rather against my own judgement, but he proved to be right.

**MWB:** You write quite a lot about your life-long interests in sport and music. How does the stimulation these pursuits afford you compare with literary excitement, such as meeting deadlines? You also make much use of wordplay, especially in the context of writing about growing older. Is there something typically Jewish about using wit to deflate threats?

**DM:** There's no comparison. Sport and classical music are delightful sources of pleasure for me. But the tasks of meeting deadlines and persuading others to do so are hard and I find the whole business of deadlines terribly worrying. I do use my verbal gyrations in the context of the growing fear of death and banishing one's age. I don't know whether that is particularly Jewish, but it is true that I do love Jewish stories and puns. In *Oughtobiography*, I deliberately concentrated most of the wordplays into that one particular section, about growing older, placed towards the end of the book, so as not to bore readers with them throughout the whole thing.

**MWB:** How important was the 'little magazine' as a medium for new writing in Ireland?

**DM:** In my 'teens, I always felt that the *Dublin Magazine* was too highbrow. I started *Irish Writing* mainly as a way of publishing more Irish short stories. *Poetry Ireland* had a similar kind of purpose. There were and are millions of poets in Ireland, more than the population! But the problems of keeping a little magazine going, issue after issue, are big ones. We often found ourselves under such serious financial pressure, that even ten pounds could make a big difference.

**MWB:** What were the main differences between your magazines, *Irish Writing* and *Poetry Ireland*, and the other literary magazines of the day?

**DM:** The single big difference that *Irish Writing* and *Poetry Ireland* had from such magazines as *The Dublin Magazine*, *The Bell*, and *Envoy*, was that of their breadth of scope and coverage. These three magazines covered not only all the arts, but also a wide range of non-arts topics. *Irish Writing*, however, was more concentrated. It published only short stories, with a few poems, three critical articles and some book reviews in each issue, and *Poetry Ireland* published only poetry, one short article and some brief reviews of poetry collections in each issue.

**MWB:** What was Irish publishing like at that time?

**DM:** The Irish publishing business just did not, and still does not have, the scope in terms of circulation that is provided by access to the wider British market. That is why the idea of a regular weekly page in a ready-made newspaper appealed to me so much.

**MWB:** Is that what encouraged you to return to Ireland?

**DM:** When, in 1967, I returned to Ireland after spending thirteen years in London, I started 'New Irish Writing' in *The Irish Press* on a freelance basis early in 1968. I was then made literary editor later in the year. I was determined to find good unknown and unpublished short story writers to balance with the 'big names'. I knew I would have to start with these 'big names' – writers like John McGahern, Sean O'Faolain, Frank O'Connor, Edna O'Brien and so forth – until the highly promising new ones came along. And come along they did, the first one being Desmond Hogan, soon followed by Neil Jordan and then a stream of others. There was a huge readership and I was delighted to learn, through an accident, that the page had significantly increased the paper's circulation in Cork. There were readers all over the world. But I found all the praise embarrassing and I was not interested in becoming known personally. I enjoyed and still enjoy spotting new talents

**MWB:** What was your experience of the literary censorship?

**DM:** The official censorship was never a real worry for me, though it did affect a lot of good people. I was largely protected from more informal censorship by the paper's editor, Tim Pat Coogan. He simply absorbed critical letters or complaints from priests and so on and never passed them on.

**MWB:** What happened to 'New Irish Writing' in the end?

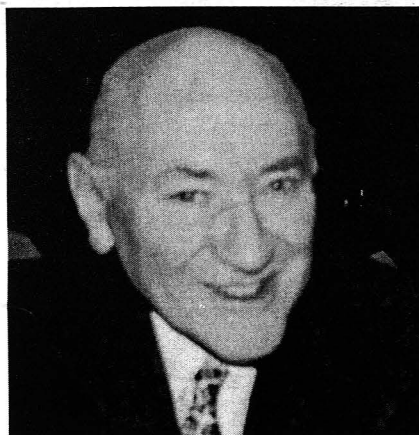
**DM:** A few years after I retired from the *Irish Press*, I tried to interest the *Irish Times* in running a weekly page similar to 'New Irish Writing', but they declined. This may possibly have been because *The Sunday Tribune* took over 'New Irish Writing' when the *Irish Press* went tabloid. Having run the feature in weekly broadsheet form for over a year, *The Sunday Tribune* then demoted it to a weekly page in their tabloid magazine.

**MWB:** What is your present view of the market for Irish writers?

**DM:** The *Poolbeg* venture succeeded largely because of the volume of high quality stories that were then just waiting to be brought out by an Irish publisher. Nowadays, however, for new Irish novelists and short story writers the market is much more wide open, with British publishers avidly chasing those writers, whether their work is up market or middle market. Outstanding Irish novelists and critics like Colm Toibin can get a good hearing. There are also some excellent new Irish writers, with brilliant recent collections such as Blainad McKinney's *Big Mouth*, Colum McCann's *Everything in this Country Must* and Claire Keegan's *Antarctica*. Blainad McKinney has just published her first novel, called *Ledge*, and that has had a good reception.

**MWB:** What are the chances of a second volume of *Oughtobiography*?

**DM:** There have been some requests. I am thinking about thinking about it.



DAVID MARCUS, FOUNDER EDITOR

*IRISH WRITING* (1946 - 1954)

*POETRY IRELAND* (1948 - 1954)

LITERARY EDITOR:

*THE IRISH PRESS* (1968 - 1986)

## BATTLE IN THE BOOKS 11: ROGER CASEMENT (1864-1916)

### 1. HOW WILL THE CASEMENT KILLING FIELDS BE ENDED?

Since his ignominious burial in the lime-pit at Pentonville Prison on 3 August 1916, the figure of Sir Roger Casement has generated bitter controversy in Britain and Ireland. What dismayed many of Casement's friends and supporters during his final months in prison was the 'evidence' of homosexual promiscuity in what later became known as the 'Black Diaries'. The sense of great shock meant that those who had been campaigning for a reprieve of a man, whose 'treason' stemmed from a rediscovered love of his own country, meant that the campaigners tended to lapse into discreet silence. British Intelligence's campaign of defamation involved the use of photographic reproductions of pages (which seem never to have been tracked down by scholars) from the Black Diaries which were employed to discredit the Irish nationalist cause, especially in America. The virulence of the propaganda use of the Black Diaries struck many Irish nationalists over the years, especially during the 1950s, as part of the unscrupulous strategy of British Intelligence during the First World War. Thus the hypothesis of the Black Diaries as forgeries became the most likely explanation as it has become generally accepted that there was a supply of forgers available to counterfeit evidence in the belief that loyal service to the established state justified the use of 'dirty tricks' against enemies of the British Imperial Crown.

One of the major concerns for the biographers of Casement over the years has been the integration of 'genuine Black Diaries' into a coherent interpretation of the man who transformed himself from a servant of the British Empire into the Irish patriot who believed in the use of military force as necessary to advance Ireland's demand for justice from the British government. Because Casement has seemed in many respects to most of his biographers to be emotionally homosexual, they have tended to settle for the most obvious interpretation of the homosexual promiscuity recorded in the Black Diaries, if it is viewed in the context of the corresponding White Diaries: the story becomes another example of the tragic condition of the persecuted homosexual in an England where public opinion had, a mere twenty years earlier, been both shocked and *delighted* by the exposure of Oscar Wilde as a sodomite. The complexities of Casement's multi-layered

personality have eluded all his biographers so far. Too often the genuineness of the Black Diaries has been concluded on little more than facile references to the unlikelihood of forgery because obviously British Intelligence did not need to forge all those volumes when all that was needed from a forger was a few incriminating letters of the love that dared not speak its name. This approach tends to ignore that what still shocks about the Black Diaries is the curious intermingling of Casement's persistent homosexual promiscuity (fantasy and/or reality?) and Casement's humanitarian championship of the slaves from the African and South American Indian races who were being exploited to produce rubber in an early phase of globalisation. If the Black Diaries were forged, wholly or in part, then they must have been forged by hands who took an inquisitorial pleasure in not just the depriving an Irish nationalist of heroic martyrdom but in the joyously perverted incineration of a radical critic of imperialist systems of trade.

What has much contributed a degree of confusion in the debate about the authenticity of the Black Diaries is the phenomenon that for many in Ireland now, Casement the practicing homosexual is seen as a challenge in the process of modernising Ireland into a mature nation who must prove it can grow up by abandoning for ever Casement as an idealised chaste Irishman. One of the more extreme reflections in this debate is the frantic thinking that it was his very erotic gay energy that fuelled Casement's humanitarian missions and that any attempt to discredit the Black Diaries can only be a sure sign of a deeply ingrained homophobia. In an attempt to achieve a final solution to the Black Diaries, Professor Bill McCormack of Goldsmith's College, London argued for the first full-scale forensic examination of the Black Diaries and managed to persuade the Public Record Office in Kew, RTÉ and the BBC to fund the project – even the Department of the Taoiseach decided to contribute some financial support to a project which would allow science in the 21<sup>st</sup> century to settle once and for all the question of forgery which had been haunting the soul of the Irish nation for over eighty years.

At the Press Conference on 12 March 2002 in Deptford Town Hall, Professor McCormack announced the definitive verdict of science: 'The unequivocal and confident conclusion

which the Giles Laboratory has reached is that each of the five documents collectively known as the Black Diaries is exclusively the work of Roger Casement's hand, without any reason to suspect either forgery or interpolation by another hand.' At a conference, a little later in London, entitled 'Science and Scholarship', scholars assembled to move onto a new battlefield which would probe the cultural history of Irish nationalism since 1921, now that Casement, the haunting ghost, had been outed as the author of the Black Diaries. Then unexpectedly, two voices at the Conference signalled that there was still much unfinished business on the battlefield of the Black Diaries, the very muddy battlefield to which most Casement scholars had hoped they would never have to return. As a reminder of the persistent hypothesis that the Black Diaries were the work of British Intelligence, here are extracts from what two dissident voices said at the 'Science and Scholarship' Conference which strongly assert, from the respective approaches of a professor at the John Jay College of Criminal Justice in New York and of the secretary of the Roger Casement Foundation in Dublin, that the Giles Report has most certainly not settled the question because its procedures and scope were deeply flawed.

Professor McCormack's idealistic hope for full accord on the question of Black Diaries as the sole work of Casement remains unfulfilled. The modernising individuals within Ireland who seem to need the genuineness of the Black Diaries as grist to their campaign for a fully liberated Irish nation may well become even more impatient. My personal view is that the eventual resolution of the Casement question will come about, not from further scientific tests but as a result of an in-depth scholarly examination of all the British Intelligence records relating to Casement, some of which are still officially unavailable and others of which may well have been mislaid or even destroyed. A truly international historical project is necessary if Casement's personality and legacy are ever to be disentangled from the web of the evil plan to extinguish for ever his good name which was directed from London, during the summer of 1916, by British Intelligence. The whiff of sulphur can be occasionally caught from the 'Casement Treason Papers' now available to the public in the Public Record Office Kew. Hopefully the involvement of British Intelligence in Casement's fate will be relentlessly explored in the future, by a team of mentally well-armed researchers.

*Jerry Nolan Editor BAIS NEWSLETTER 1997-2002*

## **(2) HOW DID THE GILES REPORT INVESTIGATE CASEMENT'S HANDWRITING?**

Dr Audrey Giles has an excellent reputation in the forensic document community. She is a member of some of the major professional societies and has published a number of papers in the leading journals. She has presented a number of papers at international meetings some of which I had the opportunity to attend. Although I have never personally worked with Dr. Giles, I would consider her a competent examiner with years of experience. What I am going to say now is based *solely* on the Giles Report on Casement's Black Diaries. I've never seen the Diaries and I have never examined them.

For a report to be accepted in courts in the United States it must present not only the findings but also the data which backs up those findings. Under the Federal rules of evidence, a report must include the results of the tests and all the notes and charts required to demonstrate the findings based on all the documents examined. Dr Giles' report as it stands would not be accepted in the courts in

America because the report is lacking in backup material. Where are the photographs of the evidence examined, the charts, and supporting detail necessary for anybody to review the report?

When you examine known writing, especially in a case like this, it is very crucial, that you determine the validity of the known writing. In the 1980s we had the problem of Hitler's Diary, which was accepted as genuine by one of the leading document examiners in the world. Michel and Baier, two of the German document examiners who were involved in exposing the Hitler forgery in an article in the *Journal of Forensic Science Society*, pointed out some principles that should be used in examining documents, "The reliable information on the point of origin of the material examined has to be obtained and inter homogeneity of the documents cannot be over stressed". Basically, you have to compare all of the known writings together to make sure how it breaks down into different groups. Can

they be accounted for, or can they not be accounted for. The known writing of Casement should be crucial. In effect, as much time should be spent on examining the known writing as should be spent on the questioned writing.

Another problem which Michel and Baier pointed out is the need for the examiner to be familiar with the writing system. In Dr. Giles' report she suggests that Roger Casement used a modified Civil Service system. She is referring to the English Civil Service system in Osborn's book. Osborn was one of the leading document examiners around the turn of the century and his book is still used as the leading text in the field. This is the system that Dr. Giles suggested Casement was using or was in common use at the time. She points out a number of features in Roger Casement's writing, which she calls distinctive features, but when she describes them in the report she fails to give any examples. Using her descriptions I went through a letter that was given to me in the Home Office material, which was distributed at the Royal Irish Academy Casement conference a few years ago. There are examples of writings taken from the British Consul in Norway. He sent a letter to the Home Office and basically he has the same general features that Dr. Giles records in her report. I am not saying he wrote it but the features are similar. If I were examining writings from the turn of the century, I would have to collect a number of examples and analyze them to establish what was common and what was uncommon. Casement's writing of the "d" was very pronounced in the way it swept up and back, but I notice exactly the same feature not only in the Consul's writing but also in a number of other writings in other papers made available by the Home Office. So that was a common feature. A document examiner, then, has to decide after very thorough examination on exactly what emphasis should be put on various features.

Dr Giles did not do any chemical analysis of the ink or pencil. With modern analytical techniques, such as Raman Spectroscopy and X-Ray Fluorescence it may be possible to do non-destructive testing in the future to answer the questions about them.

The handwriting comparisons in the Giles Report are inadequately documented. As there

were no charts in the report, I have no way of evaluating her handwriting comparisons. When I presented my paper "How Forensic Science Would Approach the Casement Diaries" at the Royal Irish Academy Casement Conference I mentioned the possible use of 'Write On'. 'Write On' is a computer program developed in Canada by Pikaso Software. The way it works for a comparison is that each page of the document, or documents to be examined is scanned into a computer and then the known and questioned documents are typed into the computer. This process enables you to select either words, letters, letter combinations or positions of the letters for display and study on the computer screen. Of course, this time-consuming method of scanning and typing involves much work, but I think that in the controversial case of the Black Diaries, such a very detailed analysis of the documents should have been employed. Such an approach would have produced comparison charts tracking every place Casement wrote 'the' in the questioned and the known writing. This type of comprehensive analysis can stand up better to all rigorous challenges. Basically the forensic document examiner should work along the lines of presenting a case to a jury. In a handwriting comparison case, the jury should be taken through the evidence step-by-step; and charts are the best way of showing why this is the handwriting of x, why this is the handwriting of y and all the charts should reach the standard that when a jury looks at the charts they feel confident in reaching a well informed judgement.

As editor of the *Journal of Forensic Sciences* and the *Journal of American Society of Questioned Documents Examiners*, I would NOT recommend publication of the Giles Report because the report does not show HOW its conclusion was reached.

Because of the controversial nature of the case Dr Giles should have been requested to prepare a detailed report that could be presented to a jury. To the question, 'Is the writing Roger Casement's?' on the basis of the Giles Report as it stands; my answer would have to be **I cannot tell**. In the fullness of time, there will emerge further illumination of the ink and pencil question. *Very gradually* we will draw closer towards convincing answers to most, if indeed not all, of the questions posed by the enigma of Casement's diaries.

*Professor James Horan John Jay College of Criminal Justice, New York*



### 3. ARE THE WORDS IN THE BLACK DIARIES CASEMENT'S?

I want to consider the Black Diaries from a linguistic fingerprint point of view. I first heard the words 'linguistic fingerprint' on the lips of Eoin O Maille. Eoin comes from a distinguished family who have figured prominently in the history of Ireland and in the practice of linguistic analysis. His father Padraigh, was a distinguished scholar and politician. His uncle Tomas O Maille, also a distinguished scholar and a professor of Irish, wrote a book published in 1916 called, *Amrain Cearballain, The poems of Carolan*. Eoin's uncle was able to prove linguistically that many poems attributed to Carolan who died in 1733 were not Carolan's and other poems of the period, attributed to other poets were actually written by Carolan. Eoin himself worked in the timber industry, first in Wales and then in Ireland, and is now retired. However he grew aware of his linguistic gene because when he joined the Casement Trail, it was the linguistic side of things that became his special field of research. He began to read and re read the 1910 genuine diary, and other genuine Casement material, multiple readings, and he began to identify words and phrases Casement used quite often and he started to make lists of them. He began to notice what he called key words and phrases and Casement's style and idiom. He became an expert not just on Casement's words but an expert on textual analysis in general. He identified 63 words, used in total 1135 times in the genuine 1910 diary, which are not used at all in the 1910 black diary. Casement's most prolific words, 'Goods' used 73 times, 'Mere / ly', used 63 times, and 'actually' used 51 times in his 1910 genuine diary, do not appear in the black version for that year. He found that all of Casement's key words and phrases, his style, his idiom were missing from the Black Diaries. When he began to study the writings of Basil Thomson of Scotland Yard who was the grand inquisitor of Casement in 1916, Eoin began to detect Thomson linguistic fingerprints in the Black Diaries.

I am indebted to Mr Michael Payne, an eminent scholar and businessman now retired, for this piece of research. Casement in the entry for Oct 12<sup>th</sup> 1910 writes the name O'Donnell, thirteen times, using an O apostrophe on each occasion. In the Black Diaries the O apostrophe is not used. Mr Payne told me: "The apostrophe replaces the long stroke (fada) over a vowel in Gaelic to denote a long vowel. This special O apostrophe means grandson of, and recognises traceable noble

origins". As I said it is used 13 times, in the Oct 12<sup>th</sup> entry, it is used in the Oct 11<sup>th</sup> entry, and in the Oct 27<sup>th</sup> entry, which is written in ink, but not used in the black diary entry. Another example of Casement's use of words may be found for an entry for Saturday 1 October 1910 at Occidente. In the undisputed White Diary Casement wrote: 'I took down his statement almost word for word, and I shall never forget it. It was told with a simple truthfulness that would have convinced anyone in the English-speaking world, I think, of man's absolute good faith and simplicity.' In the Black Diary, the entry reads as follows: 'I took down his statement almost word for word and I shall never forget *the effect it produced on me*. It was told with a simple truthfulness and even grace of simplicity that would have convinced anyone in the English speaking world of the man's absolute good faith and *scrupulous exactitude*, and all with *appropriate gesture* and restraint of *gesture* too.' The words in italics can be shown to show the linguistic fingerprints of Sir Basil Thomson of Scotland Yard.

Textual analysis, or forensic linguistics, has come to the forefront and has made great strides in recent years. However, it is not that new. In 1963, Jan Svartvik, a Swedish linguist, proved that the self incriminating parts of the confession of Timothy Evans, hanged in 1950 for the murder of his wife and daughter, were not Timothy's. In 1975, Andrew Q Morton proved that the alleged confessions made by four of the Birmingham Six were fabricated. His book *Literary Detective: How to prove authorship and fraud in Literature and Documents* is worth reading. In 1988 he invented the cumulative sum technique for authorship attribution, which he calls the cusum technique. According to *The Sunday Times* (23 June 1996) the technique works on the principle that every individual makes habitual use of certain words. The technique's basic idea is very simple. In all utterances in English, just 12 words are used for about 25% of the time; 250 to 300 words are used for 50% of the time. Given a vocabulary of about 20,000 words, the remaining 19,700 words are in use only occasionally. It is this persistent use of a small selection of words that enables researchers to build up a profile of an individual's speech.

In *Analyzing for Authorship: A Guide to the Cusum technique*, Jill M. Farrington states: "Each person's Cusum fingerprint retains

consistency across his or her written and spoken utterance and across different genres". She goes on to say that this scientific method of attribution which works across time and genre, has already been used to solve several attribution problems, and has obvious uses in legal work past and present. Using this scientific technique, Donald Foster, an American academic, was able to identify Joe Klein as the author of *Primary Colours*, and on behalf of the FBI, was able to prove that the anonymous and dangerous Unabomber was Theodore Kaczynski. In 1996, Foster is quoted as saying: "Text analysis is now where DNA analysis was a few years ago, or where fingerprinting was 50 years ago. We're realising that we can learn an awful lot from evidence of this sort". Professor Katie Wales of the University of Leeds in her *A Dictionary of Stylistics* writes: 'No two people will have

the same style in playing squash or in writing an essay. So style can be seen as variation in language use, whether literary or non-literary... Clearly each author draws upon the general stock of the language in any given period; what makes styles distinctive is the choice of items, and their distribution and patterning."

Linguistic fingerprinting has too often been misunderstood and summarily dismissed by Casement scholars in their discussion of the *Black Diaries*. Yet from the linguistic fingerprint point of view, the differences between the Black and the White are so great that one might conclude that if the *Black Diaries* in the Public Record Office in London are genuine, then the 1910 Putumayo Diary in the National Library of Ireland is a fiendishly – cunning counter-forgery carried out by Casement's Irish sympathisers!

**Jack Moylett Secretary of Roger Casement Foundation**

## WOMEN'S WRITING AND TRADITIONS 2: A NEW CURRICULUM?

For this issue I was invited to think about ways in which publication of *The Field Day Anthology of Irish Writing, Volumes IV and V: Irish Women's Writings and Traditions* might change the curriculum of Irish Studies as it is taught in universities. I find myself wondering how much uniformity there is in the approach to Irish Studies in various universities at present and how far uniformity is the result of certain constraints.

In universities where an undergraduate is likely to take only one or perhaps two options in Irish Studies, the design of individual courses is constrained by the tutor's need to provide an explanatory context for the material studied. At its crudest, this means that a course is shaped by what the tutor already knows, and often by what s/he knows about another period or discipline. In history or political science a teacher might feel required to explain the pre-history of a topic such as the famine; in literature it might involve the presentation of historical contexts along with the individual texts; in cinema studies it might be the need to provide a theoretical framework with reference to foreign influences and institutions. Good teachers tend not to be interested in telling their students simple stories, but they want to make things clear. Some people incorporate their research activity into undergraduate teaching to create courses that are distinctive and polemic. Others regard themselves as having a duty to give undergraduates a grounding in canonical texts and received opinions. If people choose to read the new volumes of *The Field Day Anthology* will issues be clarified, or will the waters be muddier? The anthology certainly testifies to the fact that there is more than enough material to justify teaching whole courses on topics such as the history of the women's movement or contemporary women's drama that might previously have been given a week or two in a course. I think the anthology will invite lecturers to think about the benefits of interdisciplinarity and the possible advantages of co-teaching some of these topics. It remains to be seen how established courses and programmes will respond to the availability of new materials and arguments. Will dedicated courses on 'women' become options added to the existing array? Will courses on topics such as modernist writing or the civil war feel obliged to add a week or two on women's contribution, or will the field be more profoundly disturbed? For universities running programmes in Irish studies in British universities, one of

the greatest and most exciting challenges will be to think of ways of inviting students to read the array of Irish language materials, mainly concentrated in Máirín Ní Dhonnchadha's section, Medieval to Modern: 600-1900, and in Angela Bourke's section on Oral Traditions.

Since I've been working on the anthology I've been incorporating the material on sexuality not only into my undergraduate and M.A. courses on Irish writing, but into courses on colonial and post-colonial writing, on eighteenth-century sexuality, and into courses I teach on Lyric Poetry and on English Literature 1740-1830. I have observed how students very often begin with a set of stereotypes about sexuality in Ireland – that until very recently it has been fearful, guilt-ridden, repressed. Reading texts the anonymous novel, *The Cavern in the Wicklow Mountains*, the memoirs of Dorothea Herbert, Amelia Bristow's 'The Maniac', and Dinah Goff's *Divine Protection Through Extraordinary Dangers During the Irish Rebellion in 1798* alongside William Wordsworth, Robert Southey and Helen Maria Williams has produced really interesting work on revolution and witness. The account of cross dressing in Christian Davies and the gallows speeches by eighteenth-century Dublin infanticides can be used to complicate discussions of plebeian identities in the archipelago. Well known poems such as Jonathan Swift's 'On a Beautiful Young Maiden going to Bed' and 'An Excellent New Ballad' are enriched when they are read along side women's own accounts of prostitution and male violence against women.

A significant constraint on the development of any course is the provision of texts and other resources. *The Field Day Anthology* is, of course, wonderful value for money, but it won't be purchased by many students. Can it contribute in any way to directing teachers to available texts and resources? Is it likely to result in other kinds of publications which will make teaching easier? As someone who teaches both British and anglophone Irish prose fiction I find that what I miss most is an Irish equivalent of the Broadview, Penguin, Oxford and Wordsworth reprint series. What is important about these series is not simply that they reissue out-of-print novels – Blackstaff, Appletree and Wolfhound have done that over many years – but that one can have some confidence that these re-issued titles will be available in print year after year. There is also very little point in re-issuing novels for the student market unless they are properly annotated and introduced. One cannot expect a lecturer to take the risk of adopting a new text onto a course unless s/he can present it with at least a preliminary context and interpretation.

In English literature great opportunities have emerged for people interested in seventeenth and eighteenth-century women's writing – my own speciality – with the increased provision of books on-line. At present there are only a couple of eighteenth-century Irish novels by women in print. There is room for great improvement here, but of course there is a limit to how many of the more obscure eighteenth-century texts could ever have more than a tiny academic readership, and for such texts an on-line presence would be a terrific advance – particularly to students who do not have easy access to the world's major research libraries where almost all extant copies of such texts are housed. The Irish Women's History Project is already developing wonderful web resources for women's studies' research.

It would seem that the anthology might have a more immediate influence on graduate studies. This is a field in which a thousand dissertations might grow. For each author included in the anthology a biography and bibliography is provided. This entry is divided into three sections: Life, Chief Writings, and Biography and Criticism. I have just looked at a subsection I edited on nineteenth-century sexuality – out of 25 writers included, 10 have nothing listed under Biography and Criticism, and another 10 have only one or two useful but slight entries. In another subsection on children's writing, out of 22 authors only 2 have received any critical attention on their work for children. The editors have tried to make clear which libraries and archives hold material useful for follow-up research. The extent to which graduate students pursue these topics and the rigour with which they proceed will to some extent depend on the

willingness of established scholars to supervise the projects, and since most supervisors welcome fresh topics and fresh approaches there is good reason to be optimistic.

It is worth asking in 2002 what effect the publication in 1991 of the first three volumes of *The Field Day Anthology* has had on the curriculum and on research. I would suggest that the greatest change of the past decade has been the partial redressing of a previous imbalance. For too long twentieth-century writing dominated Irish literary studies, and of course the desire to understand the contemporary world is always going to prejudice students in favour of studying the recent past, but the quantity and quality of recent work in eighteenth and nineteenth century studies has been leading to some major reevaluations of what we thought we knew about the past. The emergence of new interest in these earlier periods is not due in any simple way to the anthology, any more than it is simply sponsored by the growth and activities of societies devoted to eighteenth-century Ireland and nineteenth-century Ireland. The editors of volumes I-III presented emerging scholarship in ways that drew attention to the interesting reassessments that were developing in work on figures such as Maria Edgeworth and Thomas Moore, and in topics such as famine literature. Volumes IV and V have involved the harnessing together of many individual feminist projects happening across the spectrum of Irish studies.

Working on a large project makes one very sensitive to the dangers of appearing to make grandiose claims for one's work, and in sketching out overarching theories about discourses on sexuality, for example, one inevitably risks the loss of particularity and subtlety. I have had two major aims over the decade in which I have been working on the anthology. The first has been simply to publish – to present relatively little known texts to people who might not otherwise have come across them, and to explain why I think they are both important and enjoyable to read. The second aim has been to war against any tendency to self-deprecation or apology in presenting feminist work. Whatever its merits the forthcoming anthology is substantial and puts paid to any suggestion that women's contribution to intellectual history in Ireland has been slight. In that sense I hope it will be greeted as an authoritative work, if that authority gives confidence to people developing new projects about Irish women.

*Siobhán Kilfeather, University of Sussex*

## **BAIS POSTGRADUATE BURSARIES REPORT**

Happily for BAIS the Postgraduate Bursaries Scheme has become a feature of our calendar, continuing now into its fourth year. Judged by a panel of academics from a variety of disciplines within Irish Studies, the Bursaries again attracted many deserving applications indicating both the high level of research potential within Irish Studies and the on-going need for financial support for those involved.

Traditionally four bursaries of £1000 were awarded but this year the Committee decided on a range of awards reflecting the particular requirements of the applicants. An Award of £1000 went to two candidates, David Fleming of Hertford College Oxford and Paul Maher of the Institute of Irish Studies, The University of Liverpool. David Fleming is researching the government and politics of provincial Ireland 1692-1760 and Paul Maher is researching the historical roots and identity of the Loyalist working class. Further awards went to Jessica March, St John's College, Oxford, Yuri Yoshino, Goldsmiths College, and James Ward, University of Leeds. Jessica March is researching the fiction and autobiographical writing of the Irish in Britain in the last century while Yuri Yoshino's work is concerned with the narrative forms of Maria Edgeworth's fiction. James Ward is researching Johnathan Swift's writing on economics and politics as well as Swift's sermons and poems.

Three further Special Travel Bursaries were awarded this year in support of vital research trips, essential to several promising projects. These were awarded to Laura Nice, University of York, Veronica Summers, University of Wales, Swansea and Mark Hart, The University of Liverpool. Laura Nice is researching the poetry of Michael Longley, Veronica Summers is researching the relationship

between the Irish and crime in nineteenth century Wales while Mark Hart is the first postgraduate student of archaeology to receive support with his studies of the nature of Viking trade between Ireland and Britain in the eleventh and twelfth century.

Overall these awards reflect the diversity of the research being carried out at the moment across universities in Britain as well as echoing the high standards and promise of previous years.

The Postgraduate Bursaries were presented at a reception in The Irish Embassy, Grosvenor Place, on 15 May, hosted by the Irish Ambassador Mr Dhaí O'Ceallaigh.

In his speech, The Ambassador supported the work of BAIS and endorsed the Postgraduate Bursaries' valuable role in helping those involved in research. Remarking on the widespread ignorance of each other's culture and history familiar to Britain and Ireland in the 1970's when he first came to London, Mr O'Ceallaigh acknowledged that this had, happily now changed. He spoke of the need for further research into the relationship between the two countries and applauded both the work of BAIS and individual scholarship in helping to spread greater understanding. Presenting the Bursaries individually to each student he wished them every success in their studies.

In the picture below are: **Dr Claire Connolly (BAIS) David Fleming (Hertford College, Oxford) James Ward (University of Leeds) Dr Eibhlín Evans (Chair: BAIS Postgraduate Bursaries Committee) Mr Dhaí O'Ceallaigh (Ambassador of Ireland), Paul Maher (Institute of Irish Studies, Liverpool), Laura Nice (University of York), Vernoica Summers (University of Wales, Swansea), Jessica Mach (St John's College, Oxford) and Yuri Yoshino (Goldsmiths College, London)**

**Dr Eibhlín Evans**



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**CONFERENCE FEE** (including Refreshments and Buffet lunch): £25.50  
BAIS Members Rate: £20.00; Concessionary Rate: £17.50

**For Further Information Please Contact *Either:***

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**NEXT BAIS COUNCIL MEETING IN LONDON: AGM ON 16.11.02**

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