

BRITISH ASSOCIATION FOR IRISH  
STUDIES

ARCHAEOLOGY

DRAMA

ECONOMICS

GEOGRAPHY

HISTORY

LANGUAGE

LAW

LITERATURE

MUSIC

POLITICS

SOCIOLOGY

VISUAL ARTS

PRIMARY

SECONDARY

UNDERGRADUATE

GRADUATE

ADULT

FURTHER

COMMUNITY

EDUCATION

# THE BRITISH ASSOCIATION FOR IRISH STUDIES

## AIMS

The British Association For Irish Studies (BAIS) is a cultural and educational body dedicated to expanding Irish Studies in Britain and Northern Ireland at all levels and raising their professional status.

Constitutionally and emphatically non-political and non-sectarian, the BAIS seeks membership from all those with a bona fide interest in Irish Studies.

The BAIS co-ordinates activities at all levels of education and across the many disciplines which make up Irish Studies, plans national policies and liaises with government and educational bodies

## BACKGROUND

For several years the demand for Irish Studies has been growing fast in all arenas of higher education in Britain and Northern Ireland.

Its growth is sustained by a number of factors: a continuing interest in their home culture on the part of Irish communities in Britain; an increasing realisation in a number of academic disciplines of the importance of Irish Studies; the popularity of Irish music among the young and, of course, the continuing conflict in Northern Ireland. But until recently the growth has been fragmentary and the quality uneven

## ORIGINS

In 1984 a group of academics in the North Midlands of England began a campaign for the formation of a British Association for Irish Studies to be set up broadly along the lines of those operating effectively in Canada and the United States of America.

In September 1985, at a conference to explore Irish Studies, (sponsored by Anglo-Irish Encounter) those present agreed enthusiastically to the formation of the BAIS. The then Ministers of Education of both the Irish and U.K. Governments attended and spoke in support of the initiative. With the help of \$4,000 from the Ireland Fund, the Interim Committee was able to get the Organisation off the ground.

The Association was formally launched at its first

Annual General Meeting in London on July 5 1986.

#### ACHIEVEMENTS

The BAIS has been greeted with enthusiasm and goodwill by all interested parties, not least the Governments of both Ireland and Britain. Among its backers are Garret FitzGerald and Charles J. Haughey. It is consulted on all relevant matters by politicians, government servants, academics and members of the Irish community.

In its first two years the Association has

- **Obtained** grants towards its work of IR£10,000 from the Irish Government, \$4,000 from the Ireland Fund and up to £30,000 from the British Government;
- **Set up** three sub-committees dealing with compulsory, adult and further and higher education, thereby encompassing all levels in Britain and Northern Ireland;
- **Carried out** through its higher education sub-committee a survey of Irish Studies provision in the universities. At a one-day seminar in December 1986 representatives of 25 universities discussed its findings and unanimously agreed that eight named institutions be designated as key centres for the development of Irish Studies. A report calling for more funding from the Department of Education and Science for Irish Studies was strongly endorsed by the University Grants Committee. Subsequently a similar exercise surveying Irish Studies in colleges and polytechnics recommended increased funding for three named institutions and was passed to the National Advisory Body for public sector higher education.
- **Published** the first issue of its *Newsletter* ;
- **Held** an acclaimed multi-disciplinary conference at Oxford Polytechnic;
- **Organised** a series of public lectures by leading figures in Irish Studies;
- **Provided** lecturers for extra-mural groups;
- **Supported** with grants the already-successful Irish Dimensions Conferences of the Soar Valley Irish Studies Workshop in Leicester and given financial encouragement to the 1988 conference of the Manchester Irish Education Group;

- **Developed** friendly links with the American Committee for Irish Studies and the Canadian Association for Irish Studies;
- **Established** links with various Irish community and cultural organisations in Britain;
- **Sponsored** the drafting of an Irish Studies package for modular GCSE schemes (now nearly completed);
- **Collaborated** with the Institute of Linguists on syllabi for Irish Language teaching.
- **Recruited** nearly 200 individual and corporate members

#### **FUTURE**

Having achieved so much in higher education the Executive Committee has now launched major initiatives in the areas of schools, and will follow this up with further initiatives in Adult and Higher Education while maintaining the pace and range of its innovative activities.

The Association is now embarking on a major programme of fund-raising in the U.K. and abroad to secure the support which will be necessary to the continuing success of this vital work.

# BRITISH ASSOCIATION FOR IRISH STUDIES

## APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP

PLEASE ENROL ME AS A MEMBER OF THE BRITISH ASSOCIATION FOR IRISH STUDIES (BAIS)

£7.50 (\$12) UNWAGED

£12.00 (\$20) WAGED

£25 (\$50) CORPORATE

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PLEASE MAKE CHEQUES OR ORDERS (NO CASH) PAYABLE TO 'THE BRITISH ASSOCIATION FOR IRISH STUDIES MEMBERSHIP ACCOUNT'. PLEASE FORWARD YOUR COMPLETED APPLICATION TO:

DR SHAUN RICHARDS, TREASURER, BRITISH ASSOCIATION FOR IRISH STUDIES, NORTH STAFFORDSHIRE POLYTECHNIC BEACONSIDE, STAFFORD. ST18 OAD

# BRITISH ASSOCIATION FOR IRISH STUDIES

## TRUSTEES

Dr Anthony Kenny, Master, Balliol College, Oxford.  
Professor Brian Fender, Vice Chancellor, Keele University.  
Professor Brian Farrell, University College, Dublin.

## EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

### OFFICERS

Chairwoman: Ruth Dudley Edwards, M.A., historian and writer  
Vice-Chairman: Jim O'Hara, M.A., St Mary's, Strawberry Hill.  
Secretary: Dr David Cairns, North Staffordshire Polytechnic.  
Conference Secretary: Dr Anne Laurence, Open University.  
Treasurer: Dr Shaun Richards, North Staffordshire Polytechnic.  
*Newsletter* Editor: Eamonn Hughes, BA, University of Leicester.

## COMMITTEE

Tom Arkell, M.A., University of Warwick  
Dr George Boyce, University College, Swansea.  
Nessan Danaher, B.A., M.Ed., Soar Valley College, Leicester.  
Dr Marianne Elliott, University of Liverpool.  
Dr Mary FitzGerald, Crewe + Alsager College  
Professor Seamus MacMathuna, University of Ulster.  
Jonathan Moore, M.A., Kilburn Polytechnic.  
Siobhán Uí Néill, B.A., Goldsmiths College.  
Professor Richard Rose, University of Strathclyde.  
Dr Brian Walker, Queen's University, Belfast.  
Dr George Watson, University of Aberdeen.

## TO JOIN, OR FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

EITHER Complete the attached application form OR Contact the  
Secretary, Dr David Cairns, Department of Humanities, North  
Staffordshire Polytechnic, Beaconside, Stafford, ST18 0AD,  
tel: 0785 52331