

British Association for Irish Studies *Newsletter*



Declan Kiberd (Speaker) and David McConnell (Chair) at the BAIS Annual Lecture Series

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

Introduction

This is the second edition of the BAIS Newsletter offered in the form of a companion pull out to *Irish Studies Review*. It is a little longer than the first issue and has a wider range of reference. The content is determined by what members choose to send to the editors.

The *Newsletter* begins with an evocative review by Austen Morgan of the Lipman Seminar on Ireland, wound up after fourteen years, but still alive in spirit through the published work and activity of its leading lights. It is followed by a report from Stephen Regan on cultural policy with BAIS. This is an area of activity of great potential and a promising beginning has been made with a series of events organised at Ruskin College, Oxford, throughout the year. The piece concludes with an invitation to interested BAIS members to help in developing a network of contacts with publishers and regional arts associations around the country.

Irish Studies at Newark, writes John Woodhurst, has historic links with seasonal migrants from Ireland and is now developing student exchanges with Kilkenny. Strong community and local authority support are providing a solid base for the future. Newark also features in the details of Irish lecture series taking place this autumn. These include the programmes at Newark & Sherwood College, Nottingham, Bath College of Higher Education (an annual lecture series following the BAIS lectures there in 1991), the Institute of Irish Studies at the University of Liverpool, and the fifth annual BAIS lectures in conjunction with Trinity College Dublin held at the British Academy in London.

With the generous sponsorship of the Allied Irish Bank, the BAIS lecture series has been an outstanding success both in terms of the quality of the papers given and in the very large audiences attracted to them. Great credit must go to Ruth Dudley Edwards who inspired and organised the series with characteristic flair.

The idea for cooperation between Trinity link and BAIS was the brainchild of Dr Terence Michael. Invaluable support in the organisation of the lecture series was given by Eric Lowry, Rob Merrick and Richard Hopkins. Carol Scott ensured that the administration of the series was conducted with quiet efficiency. TCD itself proved to be very supportive.

Vice-Provost, Dr David McConnell, in charge of the Trinity celebrations came to London to chair the lecture given by Declan Kiberd.

Christine Kinealy, of the Institute for Irish Studies, reports on the fine work of the Joint Education Programme, in conjunction with BAIS, with specific regard to the provision of teaching materials for primary school children. The study of Ireland fits well with the needs of the National Curriculum, and the chosen themes provide an ideal vehicle for promoting multi-cultural education. In introducing the Irish dimension to young children, primary schools are laying the foundation for Irish Studies throughout the education system.

An example of unsolicited work in higher education is found in 'Faith & Hunger', a poem inspired by a study tour from Bath to West Cork in April this year. It came at the end of a history course on nineteenth-century Ireland. Adam Critchley's poem captures the impressions gained from travelling by coach through Ireland and the echoes of a haunting past.

Finally, the irrepressible Patrick O'Sullivan identifies problems of definition in what constitutes Irish books on the shelves of a university library. He also raises questions about what may be appropriate for social Science students to study. It comes as no surprise to find how extensive is the literature on Northern Ireland, possibly, 'the most heavily researched area on earth'.

Graham Davis

The Lipman Seminar on Ireland, 1978-92

A - slightly underground - event in Irish Studies, the annual Lipman seminar, has been wound up after fourteen years. Founded by Bob Purdie and myself in 1978, the collective in charge of the seminar decided, in April 1992, that it had become a victim of its own success. More than a footnote in Irish intellectual cultural history, its uniqueness deserves to be recorded.

The seminar took its name from Michael Isaac Lipman (1902-78), a 'secular' Russian Jew from Leeds, who became a socialist businessman, and gave £50,000 to a trust for 'the encouragement of socialist and progressive educational research, writing and discussion'. The trustees, who include Ralph Miliband, John Saville, Doreen Massey and Hilary Wainwright, offered a small grant each year (£650 in 1992), allowing us to run a seminar free to all participants once they had looked after their travel costs. The Lipman trust, based in London, retains an interest in Irish Studies, and would, no doubt, welcome applications - particularly those in the spirit of the Lipman seminar on Ireland!

It originated ten years after 'annus mirabilis' 1968, when Bob was an undergraduate at Warwick University, and my short academic career had come to a recent end. There was then a Labour government, though we didn't think much of it. Left-wing cultural life in Britain was polarized between academic grand theory (western Marxism had reached its apogee) and the activism of socialist sects (shortly to fuel Bennism in the 1980s). The Irish 'anti-imperialism' of Eamonn McCann and Michael Farrell was being domesticated in mainland politics, while the theory and practice of post-nationalism - the work of Paul Bew and Henry Patterson, and the early Workers' Party - was emerging in Ireland.

We appropriated the idea of a seminar from the academy (as well as the venue!), and political discussion from extra-curricular student life. Socialist scholarship was to be the project of the Lipman seminar, with the old, and new, Irish left talking in a (binational not aristocratic) Anglo-Irish context. Non-sectarianism, in the Irish ethnic and left-political senses, was the overriding norm. The programme was rigorously organized, but some elements of 1960s' counter-culture - chairs in a circle, rotating (human) chair, help with catering and cleaning, socializing together, accommodation on floors and spare rooms - were integrated. The idea worked with twenty or more

participants, from Friday lunchtime to Sunday afternoon - the majority of people giving papers which, certainly later, were restricted to twenty minutes. Participants were British and Irish, male and female, academics and political activists, students and others. Discussion was adversarial in a number of dimensions, but at least people talked rather than shouted.

In subsequent years, the Lipman seminar discussed a wide range of inter-disciplinary topics: 'Development and Dependency', 'Fianna Fáil', 'Irish Foreign Policy', 'Religion and Politics', 'The Irish Working Class', 'Nationalism', 'Labour and Ireland', 'Europe', 'Irish Migration', 'Belfast, Glasgow, Liverpool' and 'Word and Image', the theme of the fourteenth seminar in Oxford. The venue had moved to Townley Hall, near Drogheda, in 1981, to the Ulster People's College, in Belfast, in 1987, and, three years later, to Kinlay House in Dublin. Responsibility for the seminar was handed over to a collective (seventeen strong in 1992), and I continued as organizer. The Lipman seminar was neither open nor exclusive; participants nominated each other through a network of concentric circles spreading out from the collective. As the seminar became established, it drew on a wide range of intellectuals in Ireland and Britain, graduate students being especially welcome. Academics offered their specialisms, while the more ideologically minded kept up the struggle between tradition and modernity; one year in Belfast we had members of Sinn Féin and the workers' party in the same room, a historic event in its own right.

Papers from the first seminar were published in *Ireland: Divided Nation Divided Class* (1980), a volume edited by Morgan and Purdie. A second volume got stuck with publishers in Dublin, but David Cairns is working on papers from the last seminar. We could have brought out a series of annual proceedings, but this would have been editorially exhausting, the published form might not have been accessible, the political conditions in Britain and Ireland were not conducive to ecumenical left-wing publishing, and we would have been open to the charge of bookmaking. (All the seminars were recorded, and, once the tapes are deposited in a working library, they will be available to all *bona fide* researchers). Much work first presented at a Lipman seminar did appear in print eventually, including Bob's on the civil rights movement and the four books I managed to write while sheltering from Thatcherism.

The Lipman seminar transversed the 1980s, a period of right-wing triumphalism in Britain, but one, in Ireland, where the referenda defeats gave way to the election of Mary Robinson. Gerry Adams's time as an abstaining MP for West Belfast (1983-92) saw the growth of a new Irish left in the Republic, and the rise and fall of Sinn Féin fellow travelling in the (British) Labour party. 'Anti-imperialism' was eclipsed in Irish socialist culture, undermining part of the reason for the Lipman seminar. Even before the collapse of communism in 1989, the collective had taken to referring to its British constituency as socialists and radicals.

This diverse, political practice of anti-Thatcherism fed the exotic growth of post-modernism in corners of a binary higher education, where the class of '68, now in control, tolerated the intolerance of rising social groups - a relationship we may now call political correctness. (My personal alienation from the academy, and attempt to sustain independent scholarship, made me receptive to this diagnosis of an intellectual crisis). Sociology had been supplanted by -Derrida-ized - literary and cultural studies, and, with ideology thinly disguised as theoretical relativism, identity was advanced as the

only meaningful historical concept (attended by fanciful notions about the 'Irish community' in Britain). The Lipman collective looked, and sounded, like a bunch of old-fashioned Marxist labour historians. Some of us secretly puzzled over, for example, why fundamentalist forms of British feminism, ever ready to reject men as naturally violent, had taken so strongly to the culture of physical-force Irish nationalism. Was this a tactical alliance of incompatibles, or a philosophical breakthrough? Such a problem mercifully remains for others to address.

Whatever happens in the world, about which I do not feel especially despondent, Irish Studies in Britain will still need to discuss intellectual issues in a friendly and pluralist manner, alert to ideological polarization between ethnic separatism and democratic reconciliation, and on a terrain of increasing Anglo-Irish cooperation in the European space. The Lipman seminar on Ireland is dead. Long live the Lipman seminar!

Austen Morgan

The Lipman Trust is at 29 Edis Street, London, NW1 8LE.

BAIS and Cultural Policy

At an executive meeting of the British Association for Irish Studies in 1991 it was agreed that we should explore new ways of promoting the cultural interests and ideals of the Association. We identified two possible levels of BAIS cultural policy: one very closely related to the fund-raising activities of the Association and designed to 'raise the profile' of the Association with potential benefactors; the other designed to be of service to the Irish Studies movement generally and to promote the work of the Association among the general public as well as in educational institutions. We agreed that it would be a good idea to establish a programme of cultural events, including lectures, readings and music, and also to develop some kind of network based on existing BAIS contacts. We thought that this would be a valuable way of publicising events, especially those involving Irish writers on tour in Britain.

As the executive member responsible for promoting the cultural interests of the Association, I wrote to those BAIS members already involved in organising

events and asked for their support and advice. The response was disappointing, though there were some generous offers of help from a few enthusiastic individuals. We were much more successful, however, in gaining the support of publishers, booksellers and regional arts associations. Through Seán Hutton's efforts, we were able to establish a very valuable link with the Hamish Hamilton / Penguin group (which has a flourishing list of new Irish writers) and we also received encouragement and support from Southern Arts.

As a way of testing these new initiatives on the cultural front, we decided to organise a series of events at Ruskin College, Oxford, throughout 1992. On St Patrick's Day, the College hosted a special performance of Gemma O'Connor's new play, *SigNora Joyce*, which had just opened at the Tricycle Theatre in Kilburn. This event was highly successful, attracting over 120 people, all of whom received information about BAIS.

In June 1992 Ruskin College organised an evening forum on 'New Irish Writing', to coincide with the launch of new books by Irish writers on the Hamish Hamilton / Penguin list. We were extremely fortunate in being able to work closely with the Marketing Manager of Hamish Hamilton, Fiona McMorrough (a TCD graduate). Both Ronan Bennett and Ferdia MacAnna gave readings from their new books and participated in a discussion of new Irish writing. The event was chaired very admirably by Bernard O'Donoghue. The College provided a reception for the writers and other guests, and Blackwell's Bookshop provided a bookstall for the evening. Although this event took place at the end of term, it was well attended and provided a good model for the kind of cultural activity that might be transferred from one venue or region to another without much difficulty. Once again, BAIS featured prominently in correspondence and advertising, and the potential for the organisation to serve as a host or co-ordinating body for similar events was clearly evident.

Further events will take place at Ruskin College in 1992, including a reading by Matthew Sweeney (again coinciding with the publication of a new book). In addition to the events already mentioned, the College

has hosted readings by Seamus Heaney, John Montague, Ian Duhig and Bernard O'Donoghue, and has, for the past few years, contributed to the annual Oxford-Ireland week of music, song and literature. The College also hosted this year's Lipman Seminar (organised by Bob Purdie and Austen Morgan) and will continue to play an active role in promoting Irish Studies.

There is still a good deal of work to be done in formulating a coherent and effective cultural policy for BAIS. We still need to develop a useful network of contacts outside London and Oxford, and we still need to consider how cultural events might contribute to fund-raising. We need to strengthen existing links with publishers and regional arts associations. Perhaps a broad sub-committee of BAIS members, writers, arts officers, publishers' representatives and teachers of Irish Studies could provide the necessary impetus and commitment. I would welcome the views and opinions of BAIS members about how a committee of this kind might function most effectively.

Stephen Regan
Ruskin College, Oxford

Irish Studies in Newark

In recent years, Newark has been making a name for itself in the burgeoning Irish Studies movement around the country.

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

around 5% of the population.

For such a relatively small community in a middling market town, it is remarkable how things Irish have taken off in the last few years. Much of this is due to the backing John Woodhurst, the local Irish Studies Co-ordinator, has received from the Further Education College at which he works: Newark and Sherwood College. This, coupled with long term pre-planning and close liaison with the local Irish community, has meant that these developments have taken place from a solid base. In the first year that Irish Studies was offered at the College in 1990, enrolments approached sixty and made it the largest Adult Education class in Nottinghamshire. In the last couple of years enrolments have settled at a healthy thirty-plus, whilst an Irish Language class has this year attracted an enrolment of approaching thirty. Working directly with the local Irish community, Set Dancing classes have been established and two teams now regularly compete in Midlands events.

These developments have been favourably received by the local press and have positively raised the profile of the Irish community in Newark. As a result, it has been possible to broaden the Irish dimension in Newark even further, as follows :

- Approaches from the County Library Service have now led to the development of an Irish Studies collection at the library, again in consultation with the local community.
- Newark and Sherwood College is now involved in a series of student exchanges with Kilkenny in Ireland.
- A video is being made by the College Media Unit, celebrating the 350th anniversary of Newark's

national role in the English Civil War, and of Kilkenny's role as capital of Ireland during the Confederation of Kilkenny. This will establish a permanent link between Newark and Kilkenny. The venture has gained sufficient backing and financial support from all levels of Council (County, District and Town), as well as attracting private funding, and equivalent support on the Kilkenny side.

Such backing reflects the solid base on which Irish Studies in Newark has been developed, and augurs well for the future.

John Woodhurst
Newark and Sherwood College

Lecture Series

Newark and Sherwood College Irish Studies

Autumn 1992

15 September

'The Great Famine 1845-52'

Graham Davis

22 September

'Anti-Irish Racism'

Mary Hickman

29 September

'The coming of Christianity to the South of Ireland'

Mary Warrener

6 October

'Celtic Art in Ireland, from Prehistory to the Celtic Revival'

Lloyd Laing

13 October

'Dear Tractor'

Josephine Feeney

20 October

'The Ancestor Trail : Tracing Families in 19th Century Ireland'

Pat Nolan

3 November

'Such Reeling Times : The Confederation of Kilkenny 1642-45'

John Woodhurst

10 November

'From "Harry's Game" to "Children of the North"

Derek Longhurst

17 November

'The Tigers in Ireland'

Nessan Danaher

24 November

'Lethal Force Dirty War'

John Woodhurst

The Nottingham Irish Studies Group

Irish Studies Course

21 September

'Green Fields and Concrete Jungles'

Lance Pettit

28 September

An Evening of Poetry

Ronnie McKeeman-Carlton

5 October

'A Temporary Measure'

Kevin Haynes

12 October

'The Irish and their Music'

Patrick Grey

19 October

'Women and Ireland: A Feminist Perspective'

Maggie O'Neill

2 November

'The Unionist Enigma'

Jim McAuley

9 November

'Women, Church and the State'

Elizabeth Mott

16 November

'The Irish Literary Revival and Irish Nationalism'

Gerard Moran

23 November

'Alcohol and the Irish'

Frank Shields

30 November

'Irish Emigration to Nottingham after the Famine'

Patrick Murphy

7 December

'Take the Floor'

Ann Kelly

14 December

Christmas Party - 'Caint Agus Craic'

The course is run under the auspices of Clarendon College, and is held at the International Community Centre, Mansfield Road, Nottingham. Further details from Patrick Murphy, 6 Taunton Road, West Bridgford, NG2 6EW. Tel 0602-235431.

Bath College of Higher Education

Annual Lecture Series on Irish Studies 1992

Ireland : Issues and Controversies

13 October

'British Cartoonists and Irish Troubles'

John Kirkaldy (Open University)

20 October

'Conservation in the West of Ireland'

Juliet Brodie (Bath College of Higher Education)

27 October

'Irish Women in History'

Margaret Ward (University of the West of England, Bristol)

3 November

'Irish Women in Britain'

Pat Scott (Bath College of Higher Education)

10 November

'The Connolly Myth'

John Newsinger (Bath College of Higher Education)

17 November

'The Prevention of Terrorism Act'

Paddy Hillyard (Bristol University)

The lectures start at 7.30 pm and take place in the Home Economics Lecture Theatre, on the Newton Park site, Bath College of Higher Education, Newton St. Loe, Near Bath. (Wine and fruit juice will be available)

(This lecture series is held in association with the Bristol Irish Society Festival).

Institute of Irish Studies

University of Liverpool visiting Speakers

Winter 1992

11.30 am, 22 October

Mr Barry Porter (M.P. for South Wirral and member of the British-Irish Inter-Parliamentary Body) 'Northern Ireland : An English Unionist's View' (Seminar Room, Institute of Irish Studies)

12.30 pm, 18 November Councillor *Patrick Doyle* (Humberside University and Leader of Hull City Council) 'Biddies, Micks and Paddies Irish Migrants in Nineteenth Century Britain' (Lecture Room 1, Department of History, 8 Abercromby Square, Liverpool 7)

12.30 pm, 20 November *Ms Nuala Ní Dhomhnaill* 'Poetry Reading' in Irish and English (Lecture Room 1, Department of History, 8 Abercromby Square, Liverpool 7)

12.30 pm, 30 November Senator *Eamon O'Cuiv* (Seanad Eireann) 'Is Europe good for Ireland?' (Lecture Theatre 1, Rendall Building, Bedford Street South)

12.30 m, 9 December *Mr Geoffrey Martin* (European Communities Head of External Relations in the United Kingdom) 'Northern Ireland and Europe the meaning of Maastricht' (Senate Room, Senate House, University of Liverpool)

The 1993 Jeanette Gilbertson Lecture will be given by Dr Michael Ryan, Director of the Chester Beatty Library, Dublin, on 'Early Viking Impact on Ireland', in the Senate Room, Senate House, University of Liverpool, 11 March 1993.

Admission Free

British Association for Irish Studies
Fifth Annual Lecture Series
Celebrating 400 years of Trinity College, Dublin
at the British Academy, 20 Cornwall Terrace, London, NW1 4QP.

1 October

'Trinity : A Great Survivor'

Professor J.V.Luce, Public Orator and Emeritus Fellow of TCD; author of *Trinity College Dublin : the first 400 years*.

8th October

'Inside and Outside the Railings'

Dr Declan Kiberd Writer, Trinity graduate, ex-Auditor of the College Historical Society, and for the last decade, Lecturer in English Literature, University College, Dublin.

15th October

'Trinity and Irish Nationalism'

Professor Roy Foster, Carroll Professor of Irish History, Oxford University; books include *Modern Ireland : 1600-1972*

22nd October

'Trinity - An Occasion of Sin?' Readings and Commentary

Professor Brendan Kennelly, Poet, dramatist and Professor of Modern Literature, Trinity College, Dublin.

3 November

'A View from the House'

The Rt.Hon.Peter Brooke, PC, MP, Chairman of the Conservative Party (1987 - 1989), Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (1989 - 1992).

The lectures start at 6.30 pm and are followed by questions and then by wine.

Sponsored by Allied Irish Bank.

Irish Studies in Great Britain
and Northern Ireland : A Guide

D.George Boyce of the University College Swansea is compiling a guide to Irish Studies courses in Higher Education institutions. It will give details both of undergraduate and postgraduate courses, listing institutions where Irish Studies may be taken as full, or half degree courses, or as significant parts of joint or combined courses.

It will also provide a guide to places where courses centred on Irish studies may be taken as part of a discipline such as History or English or Sociology. The guide will be arranged in several sections: Entrance Requirements; Undergraduate courses; Graduate destinations; Postgraduate courses. The

guide will reveal the breadth and quality of Irish Studies courses, and it is hoped that it will provide a description of the present level of Irish Studies, and will encourage interest so that this level can be built upon in the future.

The preparation of the guide has been delayed, partly because of the volume of material to be included (more than the editor anticipated), and partly because of the pressure of other commitments, but it is hoped that it will be completed in the course of the coming session, 1992-93, and be ready for distribution next September, 1993 at the latest.

Pathways through the National Curriculum

Teaching Irish Studies in Primary Schools

The Joint Education Programme in Irish Studies is a three-year research and development project established in September 1989 in conjunction with the British Association for Irish Studies. Funded by the Allied Irish Bank, the programme seeks to raise the level of understanding of Ireland in Britain by providing teachers with the opportunity to incorporate the study of Ireland into the curriculum. Based at the Institute of Irish Studies, the programme is guided by a Steering Group representing educational and business interests.

In recent years, there has been a great expansion in the teaching of Irish Studies in both further and higher education. The starting point for any long-term attempt to promote a greater knowledge and understanding of Ireland, however, must be the early years of schooling. A major aspect of the work of the Joint Education Programme has been to develop teaching materials with an Irish focus for children aged 5-11 (Key Stages 1 and 2).

The teaching materials have been developed with the assistance of a number of working parties, consisting of primary school teachers, advisors and inspectors. Six books have been prepared in the form of Study Units on selected themes with an Irish dimension. The topics chosen are 'Who am I?' (Key Stage 1), 'Communities', 'Signs and Symbols in Society', 'Hunger and Famine in the World', 'Migration' and 'Myths and Legends', (all Key Stage 2).

The structure, content, language and teaching strategies of the books are ideally suited to the requirements of the National Curriculum. By focusing on the core and foundation subjects in Key Stages 1 and 2, the books will enable teachers to build cross-curricular programmes. At the same time, the study of Ireland provides an ideal vehicle for promoting multi-cultural education. Because of this, each of the books can be used both by teachers who wish to incorporate the

study of Ireland into their teaching or, alternatively, they can be adopted by those with a broader interest in the teaching of multi-cultural issues in primary school. Each book also includes Attainment Targets - an integral part of the National Curriculum.

Five of the books have so far been trialled extensively in schools throughout the country. 'Myths and Legends' will be trialled in the autumn term 1992. The response to the trialling has been very positive, many teachers suggesting that even more topics be produced in this series. Sadly, due to financial constraints, at the moment this does not seem possible.

Negotiations are currently in progress with a number of leading schools' publishers. If successful, each of these books should be commercially available by the end of 1993.

If you require any further information regarding the Joint Education Programme, please contact Christine Kinealy, Deputy Director of the Programme at The Institute of Irish Studies, University of Liverpool, PO Box 147, Liverpool, L69 3BX. (Tel: 051-794-3831).

Faith and Hunger

1992

on top of everything else
it rains,
through the gaping wounds of the rotting roofs
of abandoned stone cottages
decaying by the roadside
thick cloud eclipses the peaks of the mountains,
whilst on the other side
the sun shines
history teaches nothing
except to expect repetition
and contradiction.

migrating birds struggle upwards against the wind
towards the sun
now that it is easier to take flight
to secure a passage
a return ticket,
it becomes harder to leave,
harder to escape into anonymity
you cannot run away from yourself anymore
the world has grown too small
we have surrendered a space
become more accustomed to comfort
de-sensitised and lazy,
smothered by a rising tide
as we have become increasingly secularised
there is no common ground anymore,
just fur coats and donkey jackets rubbing shoulders,
air-conditioned buses weave between the eaves of
cottages of garish colours,
past empty restaurants
and illumined shrines.

if it wasn't for the fences enclosing these fields
the inward-looking
self-imposed finality,
this countryside would stretch inexorably

without these inhibitions
the deadlines,
this exoskeletal imposition
we could run away
across these fields.

something has been lost
misplaced, somewhere between here and there
in the rush to get away
something precious lies amongst scattered belongings
on a deserted beach
an entire language lies buried
in the process of eating
a meaning has been lost,
the hunger pang has ebbed away
just as the hiccups vanish when forgotten
never to return,
except when food and drink is consumed
in such disproportionate quantities
or at irrational speed,
when the difference is blurred between taste and
flavour
grace and favour
between acquired and sought
adequate or greed,
when the physical act of consuming
becomes detached from the need
life lies arranged on a plate
death a dietary deficiency,
accepted with the indifference of a second helping
to the extent that second helpings become expected,
how quickly the stomach expands
there is no impatience to live
no questioning of the need to regulate eating patterns
to ration experience,
raise another glass to health and happiness.

the cold wind on deck keeps me awake
the roll and yaw
the rumble of the turbines in the bowels below
this hunger keeps me looking
keeps me marching,
feel how quickly the weight of the meal sinks inside
disabling
whilst all the time the journey time is now
the source of food
stops questions
and thoughts towards
too willing to accept the first offering
the second helping
knowing what fruits the future holds
the outcome
the predictability of the system
stops arguments
stops the fight
too easy to accept this uneasy peace
feel the need for
the indecision
the life lived at the edge of extinction
a hunger that fuels unhappiness
the coal for the fire
rationed on winter nights
stacked high outside
against the cold that would so easily extinguish
this life
crouched inside
the laughter disguises the fear
the longing
the last refuge of the uncertain

bolt the doors against the cold
and the prying eyes of neighbours
to die in silent darkness
and loneliness
ribs protruding like radiators
diaphragms racked with the pain of emptiness
the pain of waiting
of not knowing who to blame

there is a corner of a damp field
a shallow grave
of knee-high grass
that will be forever common ground

contribute something to the upkeep please
drop a coin into the slot
and the candle will flicker until shortly after you
have left
keep the cold stone swept
and the flowers fresh,
polish the brass crosses
and the faces of the statues
petrified into silence
ten pence for a candle
and a lifetime's peace of mind
purchase a sense of belonging
standing at the back of a crowded church
of a congregation that rises and falls
as one
drink with abandon
drown the sorrows that either sink or swim
to the other side,
reel homewards along the old stone quays
following in the footfalls of writers
unheard of around here,
where American-registered freighters unload their
cargo
and crude seeps unnoticed from the pregnant bellies
of listing tankers
into Bantry Bay

Adam Critchley

Bath College of Higher Education

'The Shelves Speak'

Irish material in the library of a British university.

Irish people at British universities

'When advice has been asked from me, I have always counselled against sending either boy or girl direct from an Irish upbringing to an English university...' wrote Stephen Gwynn in his 1926 *Experiences of a Literary Man*. But still they come. And nowadays the pressures and inducements directing young people, from Northern Ireland and the Republic, towards British universities are greater than ever.

I was asked by Professor Ruth Lister of the University of Bradford to look at the study of Irish themes within her Department of Applied Social Studies (ASS) at the University of Bradford. Questions had been raised by staff and students - particularly by students of Irish origin or heritage. The students wanted a more coherent approach to Irish themes within 'Applied Social Studies', the staff felt they lacked resources.

I have made a report, and have laid the foundations of an in-house ASS collection of articles, guides, reading lists, etc. ASS has the special dimension of offering a combined academic course and professional social work qualification, the Certificate of Qualification in Social Work (CQSW - soon to be replaced by the DipSW).

ASS attracts students from Northern Ireland (and Scotland) and, unless those students are systematically excluded, their qualification must have United-Kingdom-wide validity. There is a need for ASS teaching to address the particular legislative and social patterns of Northern Ireland (and Scotland). The CQSW is generally well respected in the Republic of Ireland, and many students from the Republic attend CQSW courses here (sometimes, of course, but not necessarily always, with the intention of seeking a career outside Ireland).

Should British social work/ASS courses address the particular legislative and social patterns of the Republic of Ireland? That still seems to be an open question. But there is the material for interesting comparisons, for example, between the four different legislative areas of this archipelago -or for cultural comparisons whilst staying within the one language. In any case, there is an expectation that social work students know something of the life and culture of immigrant groups and communities.

Since the Irish form one of the largest immigrant groups in Britain - usually we form the largest immigrant group - it is likely that ASS students will become professionally involved with Irish immigrants and their families. There would seem to be a need for some knowledge of the cultural and political patterns of Ireland.

All young people going to university for the first time experience 'cultural shock' - here used as a portmanteau term to embrace many different conflicts and experiences. I do have a special sympathy for young people coming from Ireland to England - indeed, especially young people coming from Northern Ireland who sometimes seem unprepared for quite how different England is, and for the ways that Ireland and people from Ireland are regarded in England.

Whenever I meet a group of young people from Northern Ireland I am always, still, surprised by how little contact there is between the two communities in Northern Ireland - and how little they know about each other. Things have changed, a little. But when young people from Northern Ireland meet on an English university course it is very often the first time they have met a person from the other community. And the first time generally, as I say, they have become aware how Ireland and the Irish are seen in England. For some, it will be the first time they have thought of themselves as some kind of 'Irish'.

A Keyword Search

Staying with that theme, and thinking about 'Irish' - the first thing I wanted to do, for my report, was to establish some sort of baseline to the discussion. Were gripes justified? How far did the material within the University of Bradford library support a student interested in the study of Irish themes generally, and interested particularly in those areas which come under the remit of ASS - broadly, social policy, social work and community work, and the supporting academic disciplines? I ran a keyword search of the newly computerised combined catalogues of the University of Bradford library system.

The computer search located material about Ireland and Irish people by looking for the keywords 'Ireland', 'Irish', 'Northern Ireland' and 'Ulster' in titles and

sub-titles. A printout then listed books and other material in the sequence offered by the libraries' open-access shelving system. Because that system is theme and subject based, that printout offered a guide to most Irish subject matter material within the library, and of course to where on the shelves it could be found.

Including the keyword 'Irish' picked up references to Irish people outside Ireland - my own major area of study, and the subject matter of my Leicester University Press series, *The Irish World Wide*.

'Northern Ireland/Ulster'

As you will know, in some discourses, by some people, 'Northern Ireland' and 'Ulster' are used interchangeably, as synonyms, or as loaded codewords. This irritates other people, for example those people who live in that part of Ulster which does not lie within 'Northern Ireland' - and can simply be seen as an example of the ways that people in Ireland annoy each other without even meaning to.

But here I should just call attention to the fact that the printout was not exhaustive - it did not pick up, for example, *Poets of Munster*, but it did pick up *Poets from the North of Ireland* and *Northern windows: an anthology of Ulster autobiography*.

I was worried at first that this might mean that the printout was skewed towards Northern Ireland/Ulster issues, and would not be a true reflection of library holdings. I spent some time actually looking at the library shelves, creating other computer listings, and looking at bibliographic sources. I am satisfied now that titles like *Poets of Munster* are comparative rarities. The names of the other three provinces of Ireland do not carry the same emotional and historical loading as 'Ulster', and do not appear as often in book titles. And if the keyword search had excluded 'Ulster' it would have missed many references to (what strictly speaking should be called - but I am trying to stay out of this discussion) 'Northern Ireland'.

The printout revealed a great deal of material to do with Ireland but it became clear, once you got past obvious anomalies and gross numbers, and started analysing specific areas, that (perhaps with one exception) no expert on specific Irish themes has kept an eye on the library's buying and collecting policy. And that (again with that one exception) whilst the library provides starting points for the exploration of Irish issues, it would be very difficult indeed to explore any issue in depth.

All this is quite understandable, because, until the new computer programmes were in place, there was no easy way of keeping track of material. My keyword printout was the first of its kind, and would not have been possible one year earlier. Even with computer help the job is a time-consuming one.

But I will, just for the record, give three examples of areas where the library's policy had not been guided - one example comes from my own area, the study of Irish migrations, one example is in an area of more specific concern to ASS, the third is in an area of general 'Irish Studies' interest.

I could go on at length about the library's dated and fragmented material about the Irish migrations. But I won't. In fairness, in any case, in general, I find studies of Irish migration lacking in critical or theoretical rigour - which is why I have developed and edited a six volume series about the Irish migrations.

The second, more specifically ASS-orientated, example has to do with the work of Eileen Evason, mostly for the NI CPAG - her continuing work being one of the few examples there is of an attempt to clarify (as it were) 'ordinary' social policy issues in Northern Ireland. The library has the early 1970s Evason works, but does not have the more recent 1980s work, including her study of the workings of the Social Fund in Northern Ireland.

The third example has to do with Irish family names. Knowledge of the patterns of Irish family names is in itself an important research tool - this a theme I have discussed in the General Introduction to the *Irish World Wide*, and the series itself is full of illustrative material.

The patterns change over time, of course. Some of the more common family names, like my own, O'Sullivan, can initially be regarded as clan or tribal markers rather than as strictly family names. Incoming groups assimilate and intermarry, and their family names take on Irish forms. Later, with the Tudor re-conquest, Irish Gaelic forms are translated or transliterated. O becomes o', or will be dropped.

With knowledge of the patterns you can often pinpoint people's places of origin, usually within a county, but often even more precisely. You can say something about their ethnic origins, and deduce something about their religion. In the early nineteenth century, people would signal a change of religion, and thus a change of social class or ethnic identification, through some name modification - Patrick Prunty became Patrick

Brontë (the melancholy father of the Brontë sisters), Murtagh O'Sullivan became Mortimer O'Sullivan.

People continue to send signals through family name forms. From the late nineteenth century onwards Irish language activists and/or Irish nationalists began using correct (and sometimes incorrect) Irish forms. The folk music expert, Micheál O Súilleabháin, has consciously chosen that form of my family name. Mac and O are male forms, of course - and feminists and/or women language activists will use female forms. Like the short story writer, Eilís Ní Dhuibhne, or my contributor, Tríona Nic Giolla Choille.

How is knowledge of the pattern of Irish family names to be acquired? Sadly, there is no book that sets out this knowledge in the form really desired by a historian or a social scientist, and we all wish someone would write one. We rely instead on a little family of books by Edward MacLysaght.

Unfortunately, MacLysaght's books assume, as do other more popular books drawing on MacLysaght, that people will be interested only in their own family name, and the books list names in alphabetical order, thus fragmenting the patterns. Further, as MacLysaght reshaped and recast his material for his various volumes, old information and insights got lost. You really need all the MacLysaght books to have, within your grasp, all his research advice and kind good sense.

The printout found three MacLysaght books, but they were shelved in two separate places, for no reason that is obvious to me. Important MacLysaght books were lacking, including the original and essential 1957 Irish families, their names, arms and origins, which has been reprinted many times. This book, the first of the MacLysaght series, is of course the one that lists the most common Irish family names.

The MacLysaght and Evason examples came to hand. But it would not be difficult to find further examples of themes, areas or authors where, because of an unsystematic, unguided policy, books do not quite make as much sense as they would do in the right context.

The Exception : Northern Ireland

I have said that once you get past gross numbers and start analysing specific areas, that (perhaps with one exception) the library's collection is not great. The exception is, of course, material about the conflicts in Northern Ireland - the present pattern of conflicts have now lasted some 25 years. I estimate that, if you

winnow out the 'anomalies', about half of the University of Bradford's 'Irish theme' material has to do with the conflicts in Northern Ireland.

This reflects the influence and interests of the Department of Peace Studies at the University of Bradford. And generally, perhaps, it shows a laudable interest in issues that should be of concern to every British citizen. But there are problems, problems relevant to the educational task.

The late John Whyte has said that: 'It is quite possible that, in proportion to its size, Northern Ireland is the most heavily researched area on earth.' Hundreds of books and thousands of articles have been written about the present conflicts - the standard 1983 bibliography lists over 5,000 items. I suppose that a count now would reach twice that number. This amount of material can be simply overwhelming.

John Whyte's own 1991 *Interpreting Northern Ireland* analyses some 500 items and, whilst it is not a book for absolute beginners, at least gives some sort of order to this material. So the amount of material held by the University of Bradford libraries may, at one simple level, be a reflection of the amount of material 'out there'.

The 'Northern Ireland conflicts material' (if I may so speak of it) poses particular problems for ASS and its students. For the holdings spill out of the 'Irish History' section, right across the social science and social policy sections. Further, the thematic shelving system means that this 'conflicts material' is not held in some sanitised 'place apart', but is arranged alongside and thematically linked with material about other countries, including England, Wales and Scotland.

So, a student studying the police and policing will find material about policing and the Northern Ireland conflicts on the 'policing' shelves. Women, education, law, left-wing politics, religion - almost any theme within the remit of Applied Social Studies - will all have and the Northern Ireland conflicts material on the shelves.

This is 'social studies' material - by definition and by shelving. Indeed it is 'applied social studies' material - using the term not as code for 'social work'. Here the social sciences are being applied to the study of real conflicts.

I do not think it is difficult to imagine the feelings of a young person from Northern Ireland, in her first experience of higher education, browsing in this

English academic library, or following some essay theme. I think at first there is a feeling of being overwhelmed : this is how her home is seen and spoken of in England. Sheer quantity is an issue here. And, in every section that 'Applied Social Studies' might be expected to deal with, there is 'Northern Ireland conflicts material'.

What of material about Northern Ireland falling within the codeword definition of 'applied social studies'; that is to say, 'social work and community work'? First, there is very little on the shelves. Second, it has to be said that the Northern Ireland conflicts affect, if not every aspect of life, certainly every aspect of social policy in Northern Ireland. So, on the social work and community work shelves will be the Northern Ireland conflicts material. The title that always turns up is Darby and Williamson, 1978, *Violence and the Social Services in Northern Ireland*. The shelves insist that ASS deal with this material.

A knowledge gap

As always when you pinpoint a literature/research gap there is the worry: is this a real gap, 'out there', or is it simply a gap in my knowledge and resources? I have had difficulty locating research literature relevant to ASS preoccupations, and appropriate teaching material. I have misgivings about some of the material that I have found. Books with grandiose titles turn out to be short and slight. Journals with laudable policies disappear after a few issues.

In general it is my impression that research into 'ASS themes' within the Republic of Ireland is very much academic-discipline-led. There does not seem to be the amount of problem or theme-focused, agency or profession-led material you find in Great Britain. The social sciences have only fairly recently established themselves within Irish universities, and the first one to be so established was economics. (This is discussed by J.J. Lee, in *Ireland, 1912-1985*.) With the model of economics to follow much research is very 'sciencey' - it offers descriptions of people's lives, rather than models for intervention or action.

But the Republic of Ireland is facing major changes and challenges - like urbanisation, and all the problems that seem to go with urbanisation, and a youthful population. Emigration continues to be the main pressure escape valve. There are signs of a changing research agenda, something focused much more on problems or themes, and something much more methodologically creative.

In a straightforward sense, given the structures of social work in both parts of Ireland, and given the comparatively tiny population of the island, there may not be the market for the development within Ireland of the kind of teaching material that ASS is used to. Gilligan's *Irish Child Care Services* is a prosaic, necessary first step. It may also be relevant that so many Irish social workers - like so many Irish professionals - train outside Ireland.

Patrick O'Sullivan
Bradford

IRISH STUDIES

Review

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