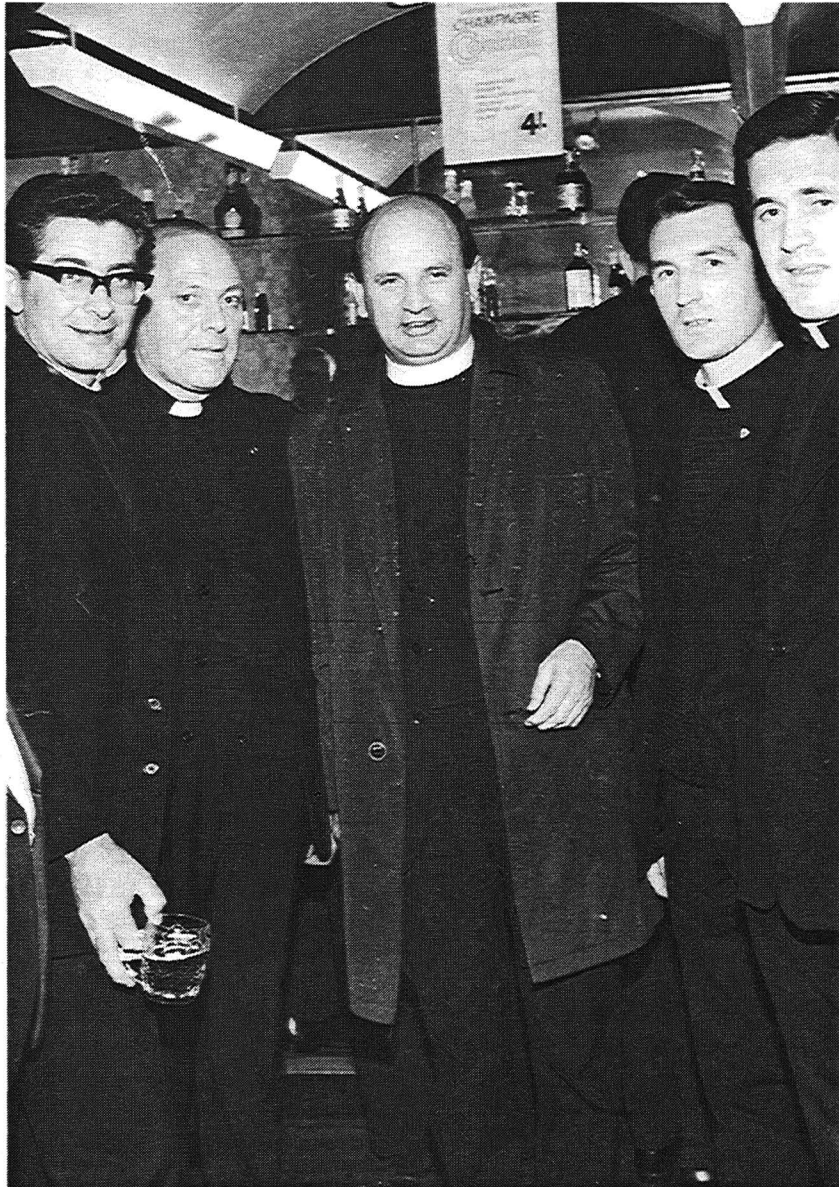


British Association for Irish Studies

Newsletter

ISSUE NO. 13 JANUARY 1998



Father Eamonn Casey and Others at the Galway Association Dinner in Camden 1969
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ALSO: REPORTS - FEATURES
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BAIS NEWSLETTER 13 JANUARY 1998

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EDITORIAL

There are new plans afoot for *Irish Studies Review*. Its editors have secured Carfax (one of the country's leading specialists in academic journals) as publishers and distributors, yet the editors are retaining ownership, copyright, complete editorial control and their multi-disciplinary brief. From now on, ISR will appear three times a year as a 140-plus page production in journal format and will continue to be distributed to each member of BAIS. We wish the new venture all the very best.

Our own arrangements for the issuing and distribution of the Newsletter have had to be slightly adjusted. To continue to develop our emphasis on news, we plan to continue to appear four times a year - in January, April, July and October and now to have copies of the Newsletter distributed to our individual members by our own printers.

There are quite a few newsworthy items in our present January issue. There is the promised focus interview with Dr. Mary Hickman about the CRE report. There is a fascinating introduction to a new book of photographs *Irish Londoners* by its compiler. There are wide-ranging reports: from the big conference in Glasgow 'Celebrating Columba' to a memorable lecture at the Irish Literary Society in London's Irish Club and onto the Women's Study Day at

York University. There is the first in our series of Profiles of Irish Studies Centres from Strawberry Hill, as well as a news report from Bath.

Disappointingly, we seem to receive few letters to the editors, although one could consider the article on Irish Language Restoration as a long interesting letter from Cambridgeshire in response to the discussion of the Irish language highlighted in our last issue.

The Noticeboard contains the promise of some very attractive Irish Studies events during 1998, including the prospect of a BAIS one-day conference in connection with 1798, the details of which are still to be decided. For the members of the BAIS council, there is the all important event of the 'Awayday' which has been organised for February and about which there should be much of interest to report in the April Newsletter. Please continue to send us news, views and letters for the April issue. Copy and/or discs (WORD 6/95) should be sent to Madeleine Casey, 5 Kendall Road, Isleworth, Middlesex, TW7 6RB.

The deadline for all copy for the next issue is Friday 6th March, 1998.

Madeleine Casey, Mary Doran, Jerry Nolan & Marie Ryan
(Co-Editors)

Focus Interview: Dr Mary Hickman

Madeleine Casey (MC): *How did the media, particularly the national media, react to the commissioning of the report, and, subsequently, to its publication?*

Dr Mary Hickman (MH): Well, interestingly, its commissioning got about as much publicity as its publication. It gave parts of the tabloid press, particularly *The Sun* and the *Daily Mail*, an opportunity to express their incredulity that Irish people could be considered within the brief of the CRE. *The Sun* printed a page of anti-Irish jokes alongside their article expressing their amazement that good public money could be spent on such research. I was interviewed on the *Today* programme. The CRE said it had generated more publicity than virtually anything else that they had ever commissioned in that way. The CRE have seen the process of recognising the Irish as an ethnic minority, accepting the report and putting their weight behind its publication, as something that was likely to generate controversy. The controversy has come in part from sections of the British and Irish media. Some Irish people have rubbished the report and also, in a patronising way, have said the CRE is well-meaning but misguided for entertaining the notion that the Irish should be considered in the context of racism and discrimination. *The Irish Times* gave very good coverage of the publication of the report; much more sympathetic coverage than the *Irish Independent*. Most of the broadsheets covered its publication.

MC: *What did you imagine would be the public, private and media responses to the report, and to what extent have the actual responses been what you expected?*

MH: I always thought it would be controversial because people like myself and Bronwen, a small group of academics, and a larger group of Irish community organisations, have been arguing for the past decade that racism and discrimination in Britain isn't just a white/black issue; and that there has to be a notion of multiple racisms, with their own specificities, holding certain things in common to be called racism. There has been resistance within academia to that argument, and in the arena of service provision. Within academia, the raising of issues about Muslims in Britain, which has

raised the whole issue of religion, means that from a variety of sources, the notion that racism is only about colour has been deconstructed in the nineties. The debates about the Irish in Britain are part of that wider context.

MC: *How far reaching an effect do you think the report has had? Have Irish issues become more visible as a result of the report and are you continuing to monitor the report's effects?*

MH: I think it has raised the profile of Irish issues; I don't think magically; it's all part of a process. The Home Office responded. Jack Straw sent quite a strong letter to Herman Ouseley of the CRE, saying that, in his review of community relations, he would ensure that the issues raised by the report were included. Foreign Affairs in Dublin have responded by agreeing to meet regularly with representatives of Irish community groups to monitor the situation. So there has been government-level response from both the British and Irish governments. Myself and Bronwen are to be invited to speak to the Labour Party's Backbench Committee on Northern Ireland to talk about the report and its implications; because quite a lot about the position of the Irish in Britain could have implications for East/West strand of the talks on Northern Ireland. So it has raised the profile but it needs now to be taken up in different local authorities. It needs to be more circulated amongst academics. Unfortunately, there has been a complete hiatus from the CRE in bringing out the second edition of the report. The first edition sold out very quickly. Although it's a large report, it's relatively inexpensive, so I think more than officials would buy it. We are monitoring the report and we are continuing to be invited to talk about the report's findings, but it does need wider circulation.

MC: *The findings of the report are an indictment of British society. You say in the report that the experiences of interviewees you cite 'reinforce the idea that anti-Irish racism is endemic in British society.' (p.235). How does the evidence of anti-Irish racism and discrimination correlate with the popularity of Irish culture; with the success of Irish singers, musicians, writers, filmmakers?*

MH: By endemic, I mean as a long-standing feature of British culture. I don't really mean to say that it is in every context that every Irish

person is in. These are the experiences of a significant group of Irish people. You could live here for years before you are subject to one of the experiences we recount. Racism and discrimination take many forms, are multi-layered. A casually employed, middle-aged man, living in digs, working hard and spending time in the pub, the almost classic stereotype, is far more likely to be subject to abuse or discriminatory treatment than someone else. Men in public spaces are probably more susceptible than women but I think our research shows that women aren't particularly protected at all. They have other experiences. I don't think there's any contradiction between arguing that there's racism towards Irish people as a feature of British culture, which is true for historical reasons as well as for contemporary, and success in the cultural/artistic sphere. You only have to look at African-Caribbean people to see that amply demonstrated... Racism is a very contradictory phenomenon. It's perfectly possible for Irish people to be successful in Britain. It doesn't mean that each individual, successful Irish person hasn't had a hostile or offensive experience along the way. The experiences of Irish people are heterogeneous... We're trying to show the complexity and it would be as idiotic of us to say this is the experience of all Irish people as it is idiotic for those people who deny that anti-Irish racism is an actual feature of British society.

MC: *It seems that there are many Irish people in this country who have an aversion to being labelled as belonging to an ethnic minority. One of the reasons many give is that they have never personally experienced discrimination or racism. What is your response to these opinions?*

MH: In both the research I have directed for the CRE report and for the London Borough of Lewisham on the needs of Irish people, sixty percent of Irish people say they want the classification of ethnic minority. Well, that's a sizeable majority. Their reasons are multifarious. One of the two main reasons given is that they see similarities in their experiences and those groups already designated as ethnic minorities. The other reason is that they think there might be more recognition of Irish contribution to Britain if they had that status... Even the regular forty percent that say no and don't know, often say it because they fear

the consequences of Irish people putting their head above the parapet... So, only a minority of twenty percent say everything is fine and no purpose would be served. It's a complex issue. I think that majority of sixty percent is a greater majority than it would have been ten years ago.

MC: *I would suggest that those who reject ethnic minority status have learnt to accept or ignore commonplace anti-Irish remarks and jokes. Do you agree that there is an acceptable level of anti-Irish racism?*

MH: I don't think there is an acceptable level of anti-Irish racism myself. I've done quite a lot of research on this. I would say that a third of people interviewed would say it is offensive, a third would say it depends on the circumstances and who was making the remarks, and a third would say that anti-Irish jokes are just jokes. So again, you've got that split where a sizeable majority say it is problematic or racist... For myself, on the whole, I don't find Irish jokes funny. They generate the stereotype of stupidity. If I'm on the receiving end of an anti-Irish joke, I will normally say don't bother because I won't find it funny... The double bind of anti-Irish jokes in Britain is that a majority of Irish people find them offensive to varying degrees, however, if you object you're accused of having no sense of humour. I think people are under a lot of pressure, especially at work or amongst neighbours, which means they are not going to laugh but neither will they say anything.

MC: *Would you agree that working class people are more likely to be discriminated against or to be verbally or physically abused because of their Irishness than middle class Irish? Are the working class more or less likely to complain?*

MH: There is a school of thought, mostly put forward by the people who would deny that there is racism towards Irish people in Britain, that what disadvantaged Irish people experience is primarily a function of class differentiation. We adequately show in the CRE report that this is utterly unproven. Given my perspective as a sociologist, trying to account for any phenomena like this, we're trying to isolate and to find the basis for racism and discrimination vis-à-vis Irish people, there is no way you can separate that, actually, if you were to give a full account, from its articulation with class and with gender, particularly. So, yes, in certain circumstances, one might think that working class people are more likely to be on the receiving end. Just as I

said women aren't protected neither do I think middle class people are protected... If you think of the two well known cases the CRE have taken up in the last couple of years: Trevor McAuley, who was a manual worker, compared with the lecturer from Middlesbrough college of further education. The lecturer got more overtly political commentary whereas it was mostly anti-Irish jokes and comments that Trevor McAuley got. The main difference seemed to be that if you were middle class you got more compensation at the industrial tribunal. I think Trevor McAuley got six thousand and the lecturer got twenty-nine.

MC: *Has the CRE received more reports of discrimination against the Irish since the publication of the report?*

MH: In the past, I would have said there was some lack of will to interpret cases Irish people brought as likely to come under the jurisdiction of the 1976 Act. But I doubt if that is the case now. Apparently there has been no slackening off of cases coming in. When I interviewed the CRE legal officer in Scotland, she said that publicity given to the Trevor McAuley case had brought Irish people to her with cases, having had none for the previous two years. They had said they didn't know they could or that the CRE was a place to bring Irish cases.

MC: *What are the prospects for a more extensive report about the Irish in Britain?*

MH: There is need for a fuller national survey. Not because we think our results aren't valid... We are quite confident that the sample we interviewed produced an accurate picture. However, what I do think we weren't able to do was fully investigate, for example, those living in a non-Irish area compared with an Irish area, or rural England compared with urban Scotland. We didn't even do individual interviews in Scotland or Wales. We were just able to look at service provision in Scotland. In Sheffield, a local Irish group had, with out question, had racist treatment from the local Labour council. Apparently, since the report, I believe they have had an apology... There were all sorts of variations, which we couldn't deal with on the time scale, and the money that the CRE gave us.

MC: *I would imagine that there are minority groups within the Irish community which you did not deal with, such as Lesbian and Gay groups...*

MH: That is absolutely true. We endeavoured to cover Travellers, especially in the first two parts of the report. We refer in passing to the research by Positively Irish Action on Aids but we use it to make a point about how migrancy is a specific characteristic of particularly first generation Irish people to a greater degree than any other group; because the Irish do still emigrate here. So, yes there are various specific groupings that are neglected but that was very much a function of the real restraints that time and resources placed on us. Bronwen and myself are interested in developing research into second generation. There are a lot of key arguments around accepting the position of the Irish in this country, acknowledging that it is complex and not a case of smooth assimilation. In academia where there is a grudging acceptance that these issues are pertinent for the first generation, it is not acknowledged for the second generation because they will have British regional accents, they'll be educated here etc., will be thought to have smoothly integrated. Well, the indicative evidence is that it is much more complex than that. There is evidence of second and third generation Irish youth being socially disadvantaged, having something to do with their Irishness... On the other hand there is other research which shows good social mobility. My own personal research is to do more comparative study of the Irish in Britain with the rest of the Diaspora.

MC: *I was wondering about that. I know you have been working in the States. Is there a link with your work here?*

MH: Yes. While I was there I began research comparing the Irish in New York with the Irish in Britain... looking at the 1980s migrants ten years on in New York City and London. I hope to finish that later this year, then I'll try and write something on that. Being in the States for seven months and looking back on the Irish in Britain was very useful. The debates about immigration, ethnicity and racism are much more to the foreground in American academic study. Within Sociology here, it's a respected but minor area.

Discrimination and the Irish Community in Britain by Dr Mary Hickman & Dr Bronwen Walter can be obtained from Central Books, 99 Wallace Rd., London E9 5LN. Tel: 0181 986 5488. Price: £11. *Madeleine Casey*

In his short autobiographical novel *Three Villages* the late Donal Foley described Irish London of the 1940s and 50s.

London, then and now, was a series of villages and the Irish made their own of many of them. They had their own public houses, their own bookies' runners and lodging houses. They went to the same churches as much for social reasons as for some vague kind of national religious loyalty. They normally followed the local soccer team like Chelsea and retained the Irish habit of remaining on in the adjacent pubs near the grounds.

Both Foley and Paddy Fahey worked out of Fleet Street in the 1950s. They worked for the Irish News Agency and in Paddy's case for all the main Irish national and provincial papers. London Irish news was dominated by the functions at the Irish Embassy, the National University Club, the Irish Club in Eaton Square and the County Association and GAA related events. The roll of the press man at such events was to record for posterity smiling Irish faces in order to show the people at home how well everyone was doing in London.

Compiling *Irish Londoners* presented a number of dilemmas. The limitations of the Paddy Fahey Archive were only too plain. The collection, when seen in its entirety is concentrated in the main into a specific number of areas; sport, politics, county associations and the Catholic Church. The bookies, the pubs, the reluctant churchgoers described by Foley are nowhere to be seen. Neither were the Herculean workers of the Murphys, the Gleesons, the Gallaghers or the Mc Inerneys. The back breaking toil of Irish nurses is reduced to scrubbed smiling faces on prize giving days. Fahey took photographs that were required of him. Grimy realism was not in much demand by the *Cork Weekly Examiner*.

Luckily some respite was to be had in the images relating to the dancehalls. Here Paddy was able to break free of the restrictions imposed by the newspapers and engage with ordinary Irish Londoners. The informality of these images records a photographer who is on the inside, recording his own people with affection and a striking degree of empathy.

The process of compiling the book gave me many insights into the nature of the London Irish community. The danger of over compartmentalisation became apparent when I attempted to track down survivors. County association chairmen were also secretaries of GAA clubs. Builders ran dance halls and priests were involved in everything.

The villages as described by Foley held true Irish communities, usually based around the parish churches. These communities were criss-crossed by lines of communication, the devotional ones of the church, the recreational ones of the dancehall or pub and the work lines linking building sites and hospital corridors.

That community has changed since the 1970s but it has not disappeared. The evolution of the London Irish through the influence of the second generation and the 1980s and 90s emigrants has yet to be documented pictorially. Perhaps we need now to look to the images of recent photographers like Joanne O'Brien and the late Terry Smith in order to bring the story up to date.

Finbarr Whooley
Curator : Grange Museum

Irish Londoners is a pictorial history of the Irish in London from the 1950s to the 1970s. It features many photographs from the Paddy Fahey Archive. Irish Londoners is published by Sutton Publishing, priced at £9.99 and available from the Grange Museum, Neasden.

Celebrating Columba: Irish-Scottish Connections 597-1997

The inaugural conference of the Irish-Scottish Academic Initiative was held in collaboration with the Research Centre in Scottish History at the University of Strathclyde on 20-21 September 1997. The two days were broadly divided between history on the first day and current affairs and literature on the second. The welcome address was delivered by the Irish Ambassador, Edward Barrington who spoke of Saint Columba as being a symbol of the ancient bond between the Scottish and Irish peoples. He emphasised the importance of the shared historic and cultural connections in Irish-Scottish relations. It was a particularly important moment to look at these relations in the context of the vote of the Scottish people for devolution.

Máire Herbert (University College Cork) outlined the founding and development of Iona and the early connections between Ireland and Scotland. She analysed the organisation of Iona and how it reflected a model of Irish secular lordship and she emphasised the complex identity of Iona, with its Irish aspects being but one part of the equation. Christianity was the main unifying force. The 10th century brought a shift in the concept of kingship and identity from people to territory, with a consequent erosion in the closeness of connections between Ireland and Scotland. Seán Duffy (Trinity College Dublin) outlined the previous reluctance by Scottish historians to give due weight to the Irish dimension of the activities of Robert Bruce and his brother Edward, but now barriers were breaking down. He could see a shift in the work of Scottish historians to a concentration on the Scandinavian world and on Irish links. He did not, as yet, notice a similar shift by Irish historians. He urged historians to undertake the long term study of events to identify long term patterns, rather than just seeing events in isolation. He drew a parallel between the activities, in relation to Scotland, of Edward I and Edward II of England and of Margaret Thatcher and John Major and saw each period as being a time when Scottish people looked to their roots.

Ciaran Brady (Trinity College Dublin) stated that, though Irish historians had given attention to the role of Scotland in 16th century Irish

history, that role had been underestimated and misunderstood. He argued that Scotland had had a most important and profound role in Irish politics in the 16th century and the effect was catastrophic for the Gaelic kingdom. He challenged the idea of Ulster being unique in 16th century Ireland and outlined the connections and interactions between Ulster and its neighbours. Under the Act of Kingly Title of 1541 the Crown sought to institute a new political and constitutional framework which would foster legal, institutional and cultural reforms leading to stability, which would be directed from the administration in Dublin. However, Dublin was subordinate to Whitehall and Whitehall's neglect and indifference to Ireland, particularly on the question private armies, fostered greater instability. The composition and use of private armies particularly affected Ulster in that large numbers of mercenaries were present there and large numbers of these were Scots. Whitehall viewed the Scots as being alien and their potential role would be to undermine English settlement in Ulster. The Ulster lords feared the Scottish military presence and a Scottish invasion. They looked to Edinburgh to control the Scots, but Whitehall saw this as conspiracy between the Ulster lords and the Scots. Ultimately the demands of the Scots in Ulster and the hostility and suspicions of Whitehall led to the destruction of Gaelic power in Ulster.

Jane Ohlmeyer (University of Aberdeen) outlined how the political instability in the North Channel region alarmed the governments in Dublin, Edinburgh and London during the 17th century. James VI of Scotland wanted to unite, civilise and pacify his kingdoms. The Gaelic Irish, Highlanders and Islanders were seen as barbarous. The King, like his predecessors, exploited local rivalries to his advantage. His programme was one of assimilation rather than annihilation, though reforming policies were coupled with the more repressive policy of plantation. The unexpected flight of O'Neill and O'Donnell and the O'Doherty rebellion gave the Crown the opportunity to make the most of Ireland with the goal of creating an English and Scottish ideal of rural activity and order. Ultimately the Dublin, Edinburgh and London administrations

succeeded in driving a wedge in Gaeldom.

Tom Devine (University of Strathclyde) emphasised that the migrations of the Irish and the Scots transformed the demography of the northern world. The major research focus had been the migrations of the 19th and 20th centuries, particularly the demographic tragedy of the Great Irish Famine. Little attention had been paid, as yet, to the migrations of the 16th, 17th and 18th centuries. Those migrations were very important for the study of the development of Irish and Scottish societies. The 17th century saw a series of migrations: military personnel, merchants, professionals, Lowland Scots to Ulster. From the late 17th century onwards the destination of migration became predominantly the New World. The migration of professionals from Scotland and Ireland differed, in that under the Union the Scots obtained the rights to free trade, competition for Crown appointments and access to imperial trade. Ireland's history of conquest and annexation differed from the Scottish experience. The Scottish migration to the empire helped to cement the Union with England while the late 1790s in Ireland brought rebellion.

The next session was entitled *New Perspectives on Irish-Scottish History* which consisted of presentations by 5 scholars of the new generation. Simon Kingston (Oriel College Oxford) presented a paper on the *Trans-insular lordship in the 15th century*. Eámonn Ó Ciardha (University of Aberdeen) presented a paper on *The Stuarts and deliverance in Irish and Scottish Gaelic poetry 1688-1788*, arguing for the poetry of the period to be taken in conjunction with the contemporary state papers, travel accounts, personal accounts, etc, to illuminate the social and political conditions of the people. He contrasted the difference in Scottish poetry's emphasis on dynastic loyalty, while Irish poetry had a more political and revolutionary emphasis reflecting the differing experiences of both societies at the time. Martin Mitchell (University of Strathclyde) in a paper entitled *The Catholic Irish in the west of Scotland, c.1800-1845: a separate and despised community?* challenged the view of the Catholic Irish as being a strike-breaking, isolated and self-contained community with little involvement in local issues or politics. He cited evidence to the contrary of Irish involvement,

with Scottish workers, in strikes and political activities, including in leadership roles. Finín O'Driscoll (Wolfson College Cambridge) presented a paper on *Social Catholicism in Ireland and connections with Scottish thought* analysing the role of the clergy in Ireland during the period 1910-1947 in relation to monetary reform and the labour movement. The increasing availability of ecclesiastical and private archives from the period was leading to a new analysis of the role of the clergy in Irish society at the time. Irish Catholic social thought was more developed than had been previously acknowledged. He argued that though the left did fail, the Catholic right-wing did not triumph, in that it was curtailed by an intelligent, conservative Civil Service and the Catholic Church was itself happy with its relations with the new state. Elaine McFarland (Glasgow Caledonian University) focused on the career of John Ferguson, "Glasgow's greatest Irishman", in a paper entitled *Irish issues in Scottish politics: the case of John Ferguson*. Ferguson was an Ulster Protestant exponent of Irish Home Rule. His grandfather had been a Presbyterian minister involved in the 1798 rebellion, while his father was a staunch Unionist. He moved to Scotland in the 1860s and felt he became an Irishman because of local hostility. He identified with the suffering of the Irish and believed in the power of people to change their circumstances for the better.

The final session of the day was a paper delivered by John Cooney (Political Correspondent, Independent Network News) on *Ireland and Scotland: rediscovering early causes and forgotten links 1920-1997*. During the early 1920s the Scots were the biggest contributors in terms of money, ammunition and personnel to the struggle for Irish freedom. He referred to the attempt, in May 1921, to rescue Frank Carthy, an IRA leader, popularly known as the Smashing of the Van incident, to illustrate Scottish involvement. After 1922 Ireland and Scotland diverged with Irish Catholics in Scotland losing interest in Ireland and concerned with getting on in Scotland. There was also a more assimilationist stance as a consequence of the 1918 Education Act. The need now was to look at Irish-Scottish relations and to foster greater connections between the two countries for the future. A lively, stimulating Sunday morning session of

a panel presentation followed by an open discussion was on the theme *A New Alliance? Scotland and Ireland in the next millennium*. Christopher Harvie (University of Tübingen), Joyce Macmillan (Scotland on Sunday), Graham Walker (Queen's University Belfast) and Fintan O'Toole (Irish Times) formed the panel and the session was chaired by Andrew Noble (University of Strathclyde). The main points raised and discussed were: the multiplicity and changing nature of the relationships between the countries in these islands; the diversity of Ireland (North and South); the changing nature of Britain and of the relationships between the countries forming the United Kingdom, particularly in view of the results of the Scottish and Welsh referenda; changes in England, particularly the reaction there to Princess Diana's death and funeral; the need for Scotland to confront its own sectarianism; the need for Unionist traditions and culture to be recognised; the connections between Unionists and Scotland; the changes in Southern Ireland since independence; the position and experience of the Republic within the European Union and how that experience could be examined and used by Scotland.

The afternoon session was a series of readings by some prominent Scottish and Irish writers and poets. Andrew O'Hagan read from a work in progress concerned with place and the importance and emotional investment given to it

WINTER SERIES AT SMUC

The Winter Series at St. Mary's University College came to an end in early December with a fascinating talk by Dr Maria Luddy. Dr Luddy, working for the Women's History Project in Dublin, produced a nuanced and original analysis based on a variety of sources in an area which is difficult to research. The four lecture series began in November with Professor Roy Foster displaying his erudite and meticulous work with the on-going Yeats biography project. Foster's talk provoked a long question-answer session examining topics from the politics of Yeats' work and the problems of writing biography. As well as historical subjects, the series offered lectures on politics and cinema. Dr Peter Rose, formerly of Queen Mary and Westfield College, gave an insightful talk on the Labour Party and Northern Ireland during the 1960s. He combined the skills of his

by people. Eiléan Ní Chuilleanáin read some of her work on the themes of: buildings and the mismatch between what is planned, what is actually built and how people adapt the space; perception and ways of seeing; the passing on and recovery of tradition. William McIlvanney read a satirical piece, in the style of Swift, on the state of Scotland and a poem on the importance, complexity and difficulty of sexual relations and the "courage of shared humanity". Iain Crichton Smith gave a lively and amusing reading from his work in English and Gaelic. Colm Tóibín spoke of the importance of the novel in Ireland and Scotland and read from a recent work of his *The Story of the Night*.

The final address was given by Seamus Heaney who said that he was honoured to be invited to give the "lock-up" address as he termed it. He spoke of his "debt of pleasure" to be at the conference and of his admiration for, and friendship with, Scottish writers. He read from his work highlighting points on: the role of culture as an interpreter of facts, events and reality and as a mediator between these and personal thoughts and feelings; the connections in Irish and Scottish experience; the need to liberate ourselves from fixed notions of language and nationality at this historic time.

Mary Doran

**Curator for the Modern Irish Collections,
British Library.**

journalism background with the rigour of academic analysis and unearthed fresh material from the period. Dr Brian Neve, University of Bath, spoke on 'Cinema and the Ceasefire'. He placed the current spate of films about Ireland and 'the Troubles' within the context of political film making. He identified several significant threads running through a cluster of films and demonstrated thematic connections with video clips. The Series, organised by the Director of the Centre, Lance Pettitt, offered a range of topics within the field of Irish Studies and also attracted a mixed audience of students, staff and the general public from in and around the London area. **Lance Pettitt**

THE MISSING LINK IN THE SURVIVAL OF IRISH

According to the statistics there were 543,511 native speakers of Irish in 1926. Perhaps there were nearly as many more overseas, as exiles, who were also fluent in our 1500 year old language, which is also one of Europe's oldest vernaculars. By 1965 that grand figure had dropped catastrophically to under 70,000. Today, 1997, there are scarcely 28,000 native speakers left. For a true picture we must count out those who sport the "cupla focal", or those who bogusly complete a census form describing themselves as Irish speakers. It is quite clear now that well over half a million native speakers have been lost during the last seventy years.

Scotland's dwindling Gaelic speakers seem to have stabilised now at 80,000. The Jews in Israel have revived, as spoken Hebrew, a language which had ceased to be a vernacular centuries ago. One may well ask where are we Irish going wrong today? Although opinion polls in the Republic claim that 65% of the people want Irish restored, our language still declines. A survey in Lancashire strictly among English people indicated that 95% of them believed that Irish, and other small languages also, must be saved. United Kingdom taxpayers spend £80 million now yearly to sustain Welsh and Scots Gaelic, their own two minority languages.

In the spirit of 'we must do something', an attempt was made in the Cambridge area in 1993 to form a small group of people who already spoke some Irish. It was envisaged that it would meet, perhaps, twice a month for informal conversation in Irish. It would certainly be a family gathering, certainly not a class. The venture succeeded admirably and has had many positive results. It was called a 'cuideachta'.

Immediately after this group was formed about thirty telephone calls were received. Mostly, they came from professional and business people in the area who had lost, or abandoned, their once fluent Irish. Many proudly wore the Fáinne in youth. Others had received all their education through Irish. All went regularly to the Gaeltacht. How they regretted being unable to participate in our twice monthly 'cuideachta' now.

Sadly this event underlines the modern decay of Irish. At the Gaelic League at London's Irish Embassy in 1992, four stout Gaels, each with a glittering Fáinne, cheerfully talked the night away in fluent English! In Ireland it is commonplace to switch off, or turn down, the media news in Irish. Parents, fluent themselves in Irish, shun speaking it to their children. What a contrast this is to the Bedford Italians, or the German wives of British ex-servicemen, who invariably bring up the kids bilingually fluent.

Nevertheless, the Irish, which was lost by our Cambridge professional people could have been saved had they been helped in time to read regularly the very simple and interesting Irish language newspapers and magazines. Their school Irish would have enabled them to do this easily. I know some who did just that and who are fluent after years of exile. Reading those newspapers provides a bridge between the schoolroom Irish and the adult media. There have been many fine Irish language newspapers available since the 1930s: 'Ar Aghaid', 'Inniu', 'Anois'. They could have saved one's Irish from extinction. Perhaps they were the missing link?

In "The Uses of Literacy", Richard Hoggart showed how newspapers furnish the simplest reading-material available in every language. They are also geared for well-defined social groups. Otherwise circulation drops. The same is true of the Irish language newspapers. Their simple standard wording makes them accessible to all, even to those with weak Irish. Today we have excellent papers in 'Saol', 'Foinse' and LÁ.

Out of an E.C. population of 360 million today, some 50 million speak a minority European language such as Welsh, Catalan, Basque and others. Brussels, in a praiseworthy attempt to foster cultural diversity, is supporting those minority languages. So there is still a good chance that we can rescue Irish from remorseless extinction. The Welsh language has always had strong support from its church. From 1607 to 1922 Irish had too little support from the State, the Church, the professions, fashion, commerce and the Arts. Then there was the opposition of Daniel O'Connell and then there followed the ravages of the Famine. That Irish still

survives at all today has to be one of the miracles of our time.

A large increase in the numbers of people regularly reading the Irish language newspapers could quickly transform its prospects. Initially this would save us the critical loss of school Irish, as was seen in Cambridge. Perhaps it could save much Gaeltacht Irish also. Best of all, it would prepare many to understand the radio and TV which so very, very few can follow today. If a growing vocabulary and the confidence required for widespread use of the language could be generated along these lines, then the

tide could turn for the restoration of the Irish language.

The examples of good 'cuideachta' in Cambridge and also in Camden Town should inspire other local initiatives. Local initiative, rather than any intervention from traditional national language organisations, is the other crucial factor, after we have provided the missing link by mastering the Irish language papers

Charles O'Beirne
Huntingdon, Cambridge

NEWS FROM BATH SPA UNIVERSITY

The launch of Bath Spa University College's new Irish Studies earlier this year adds a significant new dimension to the College's recognised strengths in the discipline of Irish Studies at undergraduate and postgraduate teaching and in the areas of Irish Studies and research. The Centre has already hosted a number of events: these included a visit by the Northern Ireland cross-community working-class women's poetry group, the "Dolly Mixtures", and the College's highly successful annual Irish Lecture Series, which this year had the theme of "Irish Women: Images and Achievements". This stimulating series focused on a wide variety of topics, ranging from a slide-show of photographs of nineteenth-century women; a discussion of prostitution in nineteenth-century Ireland; and biographical accounts of the writer Mary Lavin and suffragist Hanna Sheehy-Skeffington, to a video film of Irish women emigrants in Bristol and Monica McWilliams'

insider's account of the valiant efforts of the Women's Coalition to introduce some down-to-earth radicalism to the Northern Ireland peace negotiations. Future events at the Centre include a triple book launch, in January 1998, of works by members of our Irish Studies teaching staff: *The Irish RMs. The Resident Magistrates in the British administration of Ireland* (Four Courts Press), by Penny Bonsall; *The Bulkies: Police and Crime in Belfast, 1800-1865* (Irish Academic Press), by Brian Griffin; and *Hanna Sheehy-Skeffington: A Life* (Attic Press), by Margaret Ward.

For more information about the work of the Irish Studies Centre, please contact the coordinator, DR. BRIAN GRIFFIN, at the Humanities Faculty, Bath Spa University College, Newton Park, Bath BA2 9BN (tel 01225-875875, ext.5529; e-mail b.griffin@bathspa.ac.uk)

THE BRITISH LIBRARY'S CENTRE FOR THE BOOK

The Centre for the Book promotes the significance of the book in all its forms as vital to the cultural, academic, scientific and commercial life of the country. As well as holding events and offering research fellowships, the Centre for the Book offers public exhibition space to text-related organisations, especially those lacking a central London location. Forthcoming lectures of great interest to BAIS members should be Roy Foster on 'W.B. Yeats and the

Fin de Siecle' (Thursday, 19th February) and Norman Davies on 'Europe's Changing Identity' (Wednesday, 25th February). Both lectures are 6.15-7.15 p.m. Tickets cost £4.00 (concessions: £2.50). Please, if interested, make cheques payable to 'The British Library' and post to The British Library Box Office, 96 Euston Road, London NW1 2DB Tel; 0171-412-7222.

Irish Studies at St Mary's University College, Strawberry Hill

The Irish Studies degree, in existence since 1991, was an exciting initiative for St Mary's University College, which has a long tradition of academic and student links with Ireland since its foundation in 1850. The establishment of Irish Studies at St Mary's was a result of the efforts and vision of Jim O'Hara, a founder member of BAIS in 1986, who taught Irish history at St Mary's before becoming Director of the Irish Studies Centre. The Centre's connections with BAIS have been maintained: until recently Dr Lance Pettitt edited the BAIS Newsletter, and two of the Centre's graduates are currently Council members. Jim O'Hara is currently on a research sabbatical prior to retirement in 1998. Lance Pettitt, who has taught at the Centre since 1992, is currently Director of the Irish Studies Programme.

Situated within the Department of Historical, Social and Cultural Studies, the Irish Studies Programme has maintained an annual intake of 55 students in recent years. The overall structure of the programme is inter-disciplinary with particular emphasis on history, literature and cultural studies. Each year comprises compulsory core courses as well as option courses. Level 1 acts as a foundation course which introduces students to the major Irish social and cultural developments against a broad historical context of the development of Irish society since the Celtic period, and an Irish language option is also available. Level 2 focuses on the last two centuries with core courses on nineteenth century Irish history and the Irish Literary Revival, and a sociological examination of community conflict in Northern Ireland. Options cover Irish women, the relationship between emigration and Irish writing, and the Irish language. At Level 3 students can take the majority of their modules in Irish Studies. Core courses in this final year cover Irish history and literature in the twentieth century. Specialised options include the literature born of the 'Troubles', the media and Ireland, divisions in Irish society, religion in Ireland, Celtic Ireland and popular culture. Students can also pursue a topic of their choice through a supervised dissertation.

St Mary's is well-known for its small, friendly

campus, and within this the Irish Studies centre has established an unrivalled reputation as a close knit programme with dedicated and enthusiastic staff. An annual Field Studies week in Ireland plays a key part in establishing the Centre's team spirit. Under the SOCRATES European education exchange system, St Mary's enjoys a reciprocal relationship for staff and students with three French universities.

Research work published by the Centre covers: ethnicity in the division of Ireland, emigrant autobiography and fiction, popular culture and the media in Ireland. Books published and forthcoming include John Fulton's, *The Tragedy of Belief* (Clarendon Press, 1991), *Drawing Conclusions*, a book on Anglo-Irish relations since 1798 represented in cartoons, by Roy Douglas, Dr Liam Harte and Jim O'Hara (Blackstaff Press, 1998), and *Ireland on Screen: Film and TV Representations*, by Lance Pettitt, (Manchester University Press, 1999).

Other initiatives are aimed at embracing the wider Irish community in Britain, for example the July 1995 Writing Out of Ireland Conference, and the centres hosting of the inaugural conference of the Women on Ireland Conference in June 1998. Similarly, a grant from the Ireland Fund of Great Britain has enabled the Centre to continue its work in the collection and collation of material from Irish social and welfare organisations in Britain. To increase access for future research, the resulting archive will be scanned onto the college Internet. The college website will be in place later in 1998.

Former graduates have secured British Academy awards and Northern Irish scholarships. The Centre currently has post-graduate students reading for M.Phil and PhD degrees. According to Lance Pettitt, "Irish Studies at St Mary's attracts students from a wide range of background... a sizeable number having no Irish connections. This makes for a stimulating student and teaching experience."

Marie Ryan

REMEMBERING R. BARRY O'BRIEN AT THE ILS

The Irish Literary Society of London marked the 150th anniversary of the birth of R. Barry O'Brien – the barrister from County Clare who became a London journalist, an Irish historian and a celebrated biographer – with a lecture about him by his grandson, the journalist Richard Barry O'Brien. The lecture was delivered in the Irish Club, Eaton Square on the 24th November, 1997. This very timely tribute was appropriately organised by the ILS because Barry O'Brien was one of the Society's founders in 1891 and the Society's President between 1906 and 1911.

The lecturer explained in depth Barry O'Brien's contribution to the battle for Irish independence: as a personality in the Irish Literary Revival, as a biographer of Parnell and as a historian of the Irish struggle for Home Rule.

As in the case of other Irish notables of the period, O'Brien's importance has been underplayed by W.B. Yeats. The truth was that Yeats as an impecunious writer in London during the late 1880s and the early 1890s was much encouraged and supported by established Irish writers like Stephen Gwynn and Barry O'Brien. Tensions developed – perhaps inevitably – between the younger man and the older generation within the Irish Literary Society. One of the flashpoints was O'Brien's blackballing of George Moore when Moore was being proposed as a new member of the ILS by Yeats in December 1900. Later Yeats himself was to develop even greater hostility towards the irrepressible Moore after the publication of Moore's memoirs **Hail and Farewell**.

O'Brien's biography of Parnell was an impassioned memorial to a close friend. Many of his contemporaries acclaimed O'Brien as Parnell's Boswell. The brilliant editing of witnesses talking about Parnell suggests how much at ease O'Brien would probably be in compiling a modern radio or television portrait of a great public figure. The popular appeal of the Parnell biography was recognised when it appeared in the cheap Nelson Library Series in 1910. A related biography was **The Life of Lord Russell of Killowen**, about a friend of O'Brien from Belfast whose forensic skills tore Piggot's evidence to shreds during the Parnell

Commission of 1888-90 and who became the first Catholic Lord Chief Justice of England since the Reformation. Yet another widely read biography was devoted to Thomas Drummond, Under-Secretary in Ireland 1835-40: the Edinburgh Scot (also a scientist and inventor) who caused Dublin Castle to be more sympathetic to Catholics in magisterial appointments; once again O'Brien fashioned a compelling account by drawing on papers and the recollections of key-witnesses such as Drummond's wife and Gavan Duffy.

O'Brien's extensive research into the background of the Land Question (where he found common ground with Michael Davitt) led him to draw the conclusion that Home Rule was probably the best solution to political unrest in Ireland and that John Redmond's constitutional policy was best placed to persuade the British Government to implement Home Rule for Ireland. The 1916 Rising came as a great shock to O'Brien. By then at the end of his life, he contemplated sadly the Home Rule policy in ruins but was still prepared to acknowledge privately the idealism and bravery of the 1916 leaders. The issue of Home Rule has once more become topical in contemporary British politics as a direct result of the British Government's policies for Scottish and Welsh assemblies in their plans for constitutional reform.

O'Brien's most persistent quest in life was to persuade the English to treat the Irish fairly. Nowadays in the ongoing history of Anglo-Irish dialogue, it has become equally important to persuade the Irish to treat a fellow Irishman like Barry O'Brien fairly! Richard Barry O'Brien's articulation of his grandfather's life work was not just a matter of family piety or a salute to a remarkable patriot but a reminder of the many complexities of Anglo-Irish relationships which still remain to be culturally understood and politically settled for good.

Jerry Nolan

Women on Ireland Network

Study Day, University of York : Saturday, 22
November 1997

1997 has seen the establishment of the Women on Ireland Network, and its first key event took place at York University on Saturday, 22 November. The Study Day provided an opportunity for women researching issues relating to Ireland and Irishness to share their knowledge and resources. It was considered to be a great success by the women who attended.

The keynote speaker, Margaret Ward, illustrated her belief in the importance of having such a Network by sharing her personal research experiences and reflections. She warned against complacency in the 1990s, despite the advances made by women in academic life in recent decades. The group were reminded that even within 'Women's Studies', Irish women's critiques are often marginalised. During the discussion that followed, it became clear that a number of the women present had experienced isolation in conducting their research. Many were the only members of their institutions involved in Irish research, and some had moved away from their primary research interests in order to gain employment and have their work published. Margaret outlined the roles she envisaged the Network fulfilling. A successful Network could counter the isolation that many women experience in researching Irish issues by creating contacts between women studying or working in British academic institutions. She hoped that the Network will facilitate women in challenging perceptions of women's research on Irish issues generally.

The Curator of Modern Irish Collections for the British Library, Mary Doran, shared her knowledge of changing research needs and resources. Mary is responsible for printed material published in the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland since 1915, and the collection is particularly strong in the areas of historical, literary and academic publications. She expressed her keenness to assist Network members in their research, and therefore welcomed information on any resource materials which may not be listed in the Library's catalogue. The British Library was, of course,

about to open to the public at its new premises in St Pancras and Mary's outline of the new facilities was particularly informative. Readers will submit their orders by computer, and the requested books will be delivered to the new reading rooms from the four-level basement.

Four workshops were offered in two parallel sessions before and after lunch. These sessions were intentionally informal. Two or three speakers gave brief outlines of their current research interests, or methodological approaches to their research. Afterwards the other participants were encouraged to introduce their work, and share information on current concerns and interests. The resulting discussions proved to be focused and stimulating, with some delegates identifying research sources which they considered to be relevant to other members of the group. The pre-lunch workshops covered 'Contemporary Issues in Studying Irish Literature' and 'Researching Irish Identities'. In the former session, Siobhan Holland of Staffordshire University shared her thought-provoking work on the use of voice as metaphor, and the exclusions created by its over-use, while Helen Merret's (Exeter University) study of the parallels between domestic and political violence in Northern Ireland through drama and Fran Brearton's (Durham University) research on the responses of Irish and English male poets to the Great War proved similarly insightful. In the other session Dr Fiona Smyth (University of Manchester), Dr Caitriona Ni Laoire (University of Edge Hill) and Breda Higgins (Community Health, Cheshire) spoke about various aspects of Irish identity in their research.

In view of the research day's aims, the Network was delighted to host the launch of Clare Barrington's *Irish Women in England: An Annotated Bibliography* over lunch. Clare's bibliography, published by the Women's Education Research and Resource Centre (University College Dublin), will provide a vital resource for those researching the lives and history of Irish women in England since the Famine. Breaking for lunch offered another opportunity for delegates to 'network' and follow-up issues and ideas voiced in earlier sessions; E-mail addresses were eagerly

swapped.

The second and final set of parallel workshops focused on 'Analysing Irish Images in the Media' and 'Irish Historical Research and Histories of Representation'. In the first of these workshops Carole O'Reilly (University of Salford), Jayne Steele (Lancaster University) and Dr Sarah Morgan (University of North London) spoke about representations of Irishness in the mass media. Speakers in the latter session included Patricia Cusack (Cardiff Institute of H.E.), who offered an intriguing comparison of Irish and English cottages as emblems of their respective national outlooks, and Dr Louise Ryan (University of Central Lancashire), who shared her insightful personal reflections on the research process and the need for a Network.

The Network's first event had indeed proved to

MAKING CONNECTIONS: CONFERENCE REPORT FROM PRESTON

'Making Connections: Ireland and the Diaspora' was the first such conference held at the University of Central Lancashire, Preston during June, 1997. The aim of the organisers was to make the event as multidisciplinary as possible, while, at the same time, including not only academics but members of the local community.

The four plenary speakers John Newsinger, Jonathan Tonge, Christine Kinealy and Liz Curtis represented the range and diversity of the conference drawing out such key themes as the peace process, the famine and Irish language and culture.

This truly was an international conference attracting delegates from Scotland, Ireland, Malta, Australia, the USA and all over England from Carlisle to Exeter. The local Lancashire Irish community was also well represented, demonstrating the level of interest in Irish Studies here in the North West.

Over the two days the many parallel sessions covered such wide ranging topics as Irish

be a very positive celebration of the wide-ranging research topics relating to Ireland which are currently being progressed by women in this country. It was particularly inspiring to meet women determined to continue with their research interests in circumstances which frequently have been problematic. Participants were informed that the Network now has an expanding database of individuals interested in its activities, and that wider membership should be actively encouraged. The Network holds its first Conference on 27 June 1998, *Women and Ireland : Social, Cultural and Historical Perspectives*, an event which will highlight the high standard of research currently taking place.

Marie Ryan

popular fiction, mental health among the Irish in Britain, nineteenth century emigration to USA, and Guinness in constructions of Irish identity. A publisher has expressed interest in bringing out a book based on conference proceedings which, it is hoped, will be produced within the next 12 months.

In addition to the many high quality academic papers, there were also several cultural events including a screening of the film 'Mother Ireland', a well attended Irish language workshop and an evening of Irish music which brought the conference to a lively conclusion.

On behalf of myself and the other conference organisers (Kevin Bean, Liz Ronayne, John Shaw) a big 'thank you' to all those who came, especially those who travelled such long distances, and to all at the University of Central Lancashire who supported the event.

Louise Ryan
Department of Social Studies
University of Central Lancashire

NOTICEBOARD JANUARY 1998

Preliminary Announcement of a Date for your Diary!

BAIS ONE DAY CONFERENCE TO COMMEMORATE 1798

Theme: **Irish Revolutionaries and British Radicals**

The Conference will look not only at the revolutionary movement in Ireland, but at the connections with, and implications for, the wider radical and labour movement in Great Britain

Date: **Saturday 12th September 1998**

Venue: **Ruskin College, Oxford** Further information to follow

University of Luton, Department of History

IRELAND'S YEAR OF LIBERTY 1798

Responses and Representations

24-26 July 1998

An international inter-disciplinary conference providing an opportunity for modern re-interpretation of the Irish Rebellion of 1798 and its implications.

Keynote Speakers: Thomas Pakenham

Professor Thomas Bartlett

Other Speakers include Nigel Aston, Liam Chambers, Tommy Graham, Jackie Hill, Daire Keogh, Ian McBride and Trevor Parkhill.

Further information from Dr. Ian Bridgeman or Dr. Nigel Aston at Department of History, University of Luton, 75 Castle Street, Luton, Beds. LU1 3AJ Tel: 01582-489042; Fax: 01582-489014

UNIVERSITY OF LIMERICK

IASIL 1998

The International Association for the Study of Irish Literatures

Conference: **July 20-25, 1998**

Main Focus: **History and Literature**

Sub-Themes: Literary Commemorations of 1798-Romantic Ideology of Ireland-Irish Gothic Writing-Regionalism in Irish Writing(including Kate O'Brien, Frank McCourt and other Limerick writers)-the Irish and the American Imagination-Ireland and Europe-Irish riting and Translation-Music and Irish Writing-New Trends in Irish Writing-the Future of Irish Writing Further Information from Dr. Patricia Lynch, Department of Languages and Cultural Studies, University of Limerick, Limerick, Ireland Tel: +353 61 202101; fax: +353 61 20556.

Collingwood College, University of Durham

Eleventh Conference of Irish Historians in Britain
Memory and Commemoration in Irish History
3-5th April, 1998

Speakers include:

Dr. Cathy Swift, Dr. Clare Stancliffe, Dr. Alan Ford, Dr. Eoin Magennis,
Dr. Paddy McNally, Professor Kevin O'Neill, Mr. Alan Heesom, Dr. Senia Paseta,
Mr. Owen Dudley Edwards, Professor David Fitzpatrick, Dr. Graham Walker,
Mr. David Officer, Professor Edna Longley and Professor George Boyce

Further information from Dr. Ian McBride, Dept. of History, University of Durham, 43
North Bailey, Durham DH1 3EX. Registration by 5 March, 1998.

WOMEN ON IRELAND NETWORK

Call for Papers

Women and Ireland : Social Cultural and Historical Perspectives

This inaugural conference of the Women on Ireland Network aims to offer an interdisciplinary approach and to be as inclusive as possible. We welcome papers from all disciplines including literature, politics, geography, history, art history, cultural studies, gender studies, sociology etc.

The conference will be held at **St. Mary's University College, Strawberry Hill** on
Saturday 27th June 1998.

*There will be a Reception at the Irish Embassy
on the evening of Friday 26th June 1998*

Please submit abstracts of 200 words by 23rd February 1998 to: Catriona Ni Laoire,
Urban Policy Studies, Edge Hill University College, Ormskirk, Lancashire L39 4QP.

Conference places must be booked by 1st April 1998

PHOTO IMAGES FROM 1969 AND 1997



1969

BIG TOM BACKSTAGE AT THE GALTYMORE



1997 WOMEN ON IRELAND NETWORK IN SESSION

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

Cait Thompson, 17 Mill Close, Braunston. Northants NN11 7HY Tel: 01788-891494

DATE OF AWAY DAY FOR BAIS COUNCIL: SATURDAY 14.02.98

BENEFITS OF ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP:

- 3 issues of Irish Studies Review and BAIS Newsletter posted to you
- Institutional Membership includes two copies of ISR & Newsletter
- Network of nearly 300 members with Irish Studies interests.

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All overseas applications should include a £2-00 supplement to cover postage costs. Overseas remittances should be sent in the form of a Sterling Money Order only. For further information about subscription rates please see application form on the next page. Membership runs for twelve months. Members will receive a reminder of renewal prior to membership lapsing. **IF NOT ALREADY A MEMBER FILL UP THE APPLICATION FORM NOW.**

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