

British Association for Irish Studies NEWS

June 2004

Dear Members

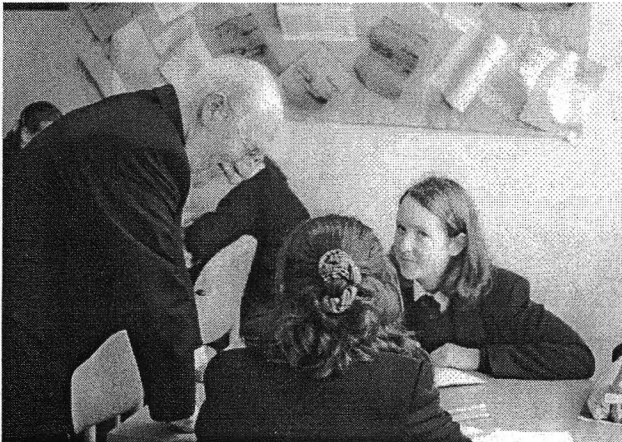
This is the second of the new BAIS NEWS bulletins. If you have any material that you would like to be included in future editions please contact me. The next deadline for copy (in electronic form if possible) is **1 September 2004**.

Dr Catherine Nash, Department of Geography, Queen Mary, University of London, Mile End Road, London, E1 4NS, email: c.nash@qmul.ac.uk.
Member, BAIS National Council

BAIS ACTIVITIES

BAIS AND THE IRISH LANGUAGE

BAIS has as one of its aims a commitment to the broader use and appreciation of the Irish language. Members like Eleanor Burgess and Cathal ó Beirn have been at the forefront of revitalising the language in Britain, and placing it firmly in a non-political and non-sectarian context. In 2003, over 500 people attended their residential Irish colleges, in places as far apart as Hampshire, Derbyshire, Essex and Durham University. Meanwhile, Christy Evans has campaigned for Irish within the European Union, culminating with an invitation to the Dáil in April 2004.



Ambassador Ó Ceallaigh visits the Irish Studies' Department at Shenfield High School, Essex.

Thug Ambasadóir na hÉireann Dáthí ó Ceallaigh cuairt le déanaí ar Shenfield High School, Essex. 'Scoil ar leith is ea an scoil seo', a dúirt sé, 'Téann na daltaí ar chuairt go hInis Meáin agus 'TG4' gach samhradh.'

Díograiseoirí Gaeilge ag léiriú tacaíochta dá dteanga i gColáiste na nGael, Derbyshire, 2004.

Tar éis na Bealtaine, beidh 20 teanga oifigiúil ag an Aontas. Cén dochar gan Ghaeilge a bheith ina teanga oifigiúil den Aontas Eorpach? Fostóidh an tAontas 110 aistreoirí breise agus 40 teangairí breise i gcomhair gach teanga oifigiúil nua. Dá mbeadh Gaeilge san áireamh, bheadh deiseanna fostaíochta ann dá réir do Éireannaigh. D'íocfadh ciste aistriúcháin an A.E. as an gcúram sin agus ní foláir d'Éirinn íoc sa chiste sin pé scéal é.

BAIS have arranged a busy schedule of **Irish language events during 2004/5**. These include gatherings in Scotland, Coventry, Winchester, Guernsey and Maastricht.

Our Scottish event will bring together teachers, activists and officials from the Scottish Parliament. This gathering is in southern Scotland and will feature language classes, music and talks from both Scottish and Irish Gaelic enthusiasts. The event is avowedly non political, and will have Protestant and Catholic people from both Scotland and Ireland in attendance. BAIS members have also been busy in Essex recently. Eleanor Burgess arranged for a tour around a local stately home in Irish, and even produced a detailed guidebook in the language. Over 30 people came for the tour of Ingatestone Hall, and it is indicative of the new, grass roots enthusiasm for the native language. Meanwhile, Dónal Daly, an undergraduate at London Metropolitan University visited Shenfield High School in Essex. The school has a number of Irish speaking teachers and runs classes for both children and adults. Dónal's research suggests that the language is increasing amongst the second generation Irish, and is further re-enforced in London by young graduates from Northern Ireland. 'In 1970, only 2 children received an Irish-medium education in the North', said Dónal, 'but by 2005, there will be almost 9,000. This rise of Irish is beginning to be felt in Britain, too!'

For further details contact Christy Evans, Shenfield High School, Essex, c.evans@shenfieldessexsch.co.uk

BAIS POSTGRADUATE BURSARIES SCHEME 2004

We are very happy to announce the winners of the
BAIS Postgraduate Bursaries for 2004.

£750 was awarded to:

Lisa Godson (Royal College of Art) for her research on
*Public events and ceremonies in the Irish Free State
between 1922-49*

James Powell (St Antony's College Oxford) for his work on
*Irish-American emigration and the cultural renaissance
between 1891 and 1916.*

£500 was awarded to:

Aurelia Spottiswoode Annat (Oxford) for her research on
History, identity and Irish women writers, 1891-1945.

Daniel Jackson (Northumbria University) for his work on
Anti-Home Rule campaigns in Britain, 1910-1914

Dornan (University of Aberdeen) for his research on *Irish and
Scottish poetry in the 18th and 19th centuries*

The awards were formally presented at a reception hosted
by The Ambassador of Ireland and Mrs Dáithí
O'Ceallaigh at a reception at the Embassy of Ireland on
Wednesday 5th May attended by the award winners,
BAIS council members and guests.

This is an annual scheme to support postgraduate work in
Irish studies in Britain. Students may use the bursary for
travel expenses, payment of fees, subsistence or other
expenses related to the completion of their research
projects. The judging panel was very impressed by the
high quality of the applicants and encouraged by this
indication of the vibrancy of postgraduate work in Irish
studies in Britain.

JOINT CONFERENCE OF THE AMERICAN CONFERENCE FOR IRISH STUDIES, THE BRITISH ASSOCIATION OF IRISH STUDIES AND THE EUROPEAN FEDERATION OF ASSOCIATIONS & CENTRES OF IRISH STUDIES

University of Liverpool 12 – 16 July 2004

The full conference programme, registration forms and accommodation booking forms are available at:
<http://www.liv.ac.uk/irish/acis.html>

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

UNIVERSITY COLLEGE CHESTER CENTRE FOR VICTORIAN STUDIES

IRELAND AND THE VICTORIANS AN INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE, 2-4 JULY 2004

This broad-based interdisciplinary conference, commencing on the evening of Friday 2 July and concluding after lunch on Sunday 4 July, seeks to provide new perspectives on the complex relationship between Britain and Ireland during the long nineteenth century with particular reference to political, social and cultural connections between the two islands during the period. The conference will include keynote lectures and a range of papers from eminent scholars and new researchers.

For further information see <http://www.chester.ac.uk/history/conf.html>

'Now and in time to be' Irish Studies Conference at the University of Sunderland, 2004.

Following the success of our international conference: Representing Ireland: Past, present and Future, the University of Sunderland are soliciting papers for an interdisciplinary conference which will run from 12th to 14th November, 2004. The conference organisers hope to represent a wide range of approaches to Irish culture from academics and non-academics alike. Performances, roundtables, collaborative projects, and other non-traditional presentations are encouraged in addition to conference papers. We welcome submissions for panels and papers under the thematic headings of:

The Word, The Icon .The Ritual

This celebration of Irish culture will include a performance of Brian Friel's *Dancing at Lughnasa*, by a professional company on the evening of Friday 12th November, and a licensed ceilidh with refreshments on Saturday 13th. Most of the event will take place at the University of Sunderland's Sir Tom Cowie Centre at Saint Peter's Campus.

For further information contact:

Dr Alison O'Malley-Younger
Susan Cottam [conference administrator]

alison_younger@yahoo.co.uk or
susan.cottam@sunderland.ac.uk

CONFERENCE REPORTS

Meeting of Minds: comparing migrant experiences across ethnic groups

Organised by the Women on Ireland Research Network
Camden Irish Centre, Saturday 22 November 2003.

Louise Ryan, Middlesex University.

The aim of this event was to bring together academic researchers, writers and artists from across a wide range of disciplines and from diverse backgrounds. We wanted to achieve a 'meeting of minds' not only across academic and artistic boundaries but also to share experiences across ethnicities. Asylum seekers and refugees are high on the political agenda at the moment and are regularly debated in the mass media. We wanted to compare the current situation with the historical experiences of older and more established migrant communities in Britain. In addition, by including poets, writers and artists, we aimed to widen the scope of this event. Work by poets, artists and musicians beautifully illustrated themes such as 'home', 'loss', 'religion', 'culture shock' and 'adaptation'. Munise Unver provided music, on a classic Turkish flute, while the London-based Irish artist Jonathan O'Dea exhibited some of his paintings.

The structure of the conference facilitated a 'meeting of minds'. The day began with two plenary papers that demonstrated the kind of comparisons we aimed to achieve. While Choman Hardi spoke about the cultural adaption of Kurdish women refugees in Britain, Mary Tilki spoke about the experiences of Irish migrants in London and the importance of contact with 'home'. In other sessions oral history was used to uncover the experiences of older Irish women migrants from the 1930s and the forgotten stories of German war brides who came to Britain in the 1940s. The history of Chinese migrants illustrated the strategies of adaptation used by this under-researched migrant community. Another paper addressed cultural adaptation and body image in relation to Black women. The pressure to conform to Western notions of beauty is leading to an increase in problems such as eating disorders among the Black community in Britain. In addition to oral history, other researchers used literary sources as a way of uncovering migrant experiences in this country. In an excellent example of the 'meeting of minds', the writing of Irish migrants was compared with Arab women's writing in Britain. Literature is an important means of self-expression for migrants and has been used by women from diverse ethnic groups to address issues that may not be easily spoken about in other media.

Bringing together academic research and artistic representations, Joanne O'Brien talked about using photography as a way of capturing the experiences of people and the ethical issues involved in photographing people and recording their stories. Media representation of migrant communities was the theme of several papers. David Miller's plenary presentation focused on the impact of the 'War on Terrorism' on particular ethnic minority communities in Britain today. The day was brought to a fitting close with readings from three poets who are all now based in London; Ghias Aljundi from Syria, Karim Haidari from Afghanistan and Martina Evans from Ireland.

This event was attended by 46 people, of whom 18 were post-graduate students. All the post-graduates are researching issues related to migration, ethnicity and identity. We were delighted that we could offer a specially reduced rate to post-graduates that enabled them to attend this stimulating and thought-provoking event.

Ireland: Space, Text, Time

The Academy for Irish Cultural Heritages
University of Ulster

Yvonne Whelan, Academy for Irish Cultural Heritages
University of Ulster

The first plenary conference of the Academy for Irish Cultural Heritages took place at the University of Ulster on March 26th – 28th last. Entitled 'Ireland: Space, Text, Time', the conference set out to examine the ways in which concepts of space and time have shaped our understanding of issues of place and identity on the island. More than 60 papers were presented over three days on a broad range of themes which reflected the conference's engagement with key aspects of identity formation and expression, an engagement which is central to the Academy's field of enquiry.

The conference was organised by the Academy for Irish Cultural Heritages which was launched in October 2001, its aim being to investigate questions of identity implicated in the shaping of Ireland and Irishness. In so doing, it has become one of the leading centres of scholarship and research into cultural studies related to Ireland and the Irish Diaspora. Very consciously

an interdisciplinary endeavour, the Academy's work integrates literary, geographical and historical perspectives within Irish Studies. It was with these thematic strands that the conference was most centrally concerned.

Prof Brian Graham, Director of the Academy, welcomed an audience of over ninety delegates on Friday afternoon, while the opening plenary was chaired by the distinguished literary critic and visiting Leverhulme Professor at the Academy, John Wilson Foster. In a stimulating and thought-provoking series of papers, Brian Caraher (Queen's University Belfast), Liam Harte (University of Ulster) and Elizabeth Malcolm (University of Melbourne) each spoke to the topic 'Interdisciplinarity: Theory and Practice'. Their presentations provoked lively and sustained discussion from the floor as the merits and otherwise of interdisciplinary approaches were teased out.

This was followed by the first set of parallel sessions each of which reflected the conference's attention to the themes of space, text and time. In a session entitled 'Modern Poetry' papers addressed the work of Louis MacNeice and WB Yeats (Richard Brown, Open University), James Joyce and Thomas Kinsella (Derval Tubridy, Goldsmith's) and Medbh McGuckian and Eiléan Ní Chuilleanáin (Borbála Faragó, UCD), while Catriona Clutterbuck (UCD) discussed the topic of Pre-sequential healing in contemporary Irish poetry. The role of the Irish Diaspora in forging narratives of identity formed the focus of the 'Diaspora' session. Thomas Byrne (NUI Maynooth) elaborated upon diasporic versions of Irish identity in the eighteenth century, Tony Murray (University of North London) spoke on the 'Navy Narratives' of Irish construction workers in 20th century Britain, and Aidan McQuillan (University of Toronto) presented on the Irish in 19th century Quebec. Also in this session Brian Lambkin of the Ulster-American Folk Park in Omagh delivered a fascinating paper on the recent discovery of the work of an Irish needlework sampler in Australia. His paper was particularly instructive in pointing to the importance of visual artefacts in our considerations of the Irish Diaspora. 'Heritage, Memory and Landscape' formed the thematic focus of the third session with papers on the Boyne Valley (Gerry O'Reilly, Dublin City University), the proliferation of tourist shops in Ireland (Tok Thompson, TCD) and the role of Wicklow's historic jail as a site of cultural heritage (Teresa Breathnach, Dublin City University).

The evening programme got underway with a reception hosted by the Provost of Magee campus, Prof Tom Fraser in the Great Hall. He then introduced the first keynote address of the conference, delivered by Prof Tom Devine (University of Aberdeen). In his paper entitled 'The death and reinvention of Scotland', Devine expanded upon some of the themes and issues he raised in his best-selling and richly detailed book, *The Scottish Nation 1700-2000* (2000).

A busy set of Saturday papers got underway with three parallel sessions on 'Landscapes of Commemoration', 'Contemporary Fiction', and 'Immigrants and Minorities'. In the first of these there was a particular focus on the rather contentious commemorative practices that prevail in Northern Ireland. Three graduate students from the University of Ulster each addressed different aspects of this commemorative process. Chris Manson spoke about the commemoration of the First World War in Belfast, while Catherine Switzer outlined the ways in which security forces victims of 'the Troubles' have been memorialised. In a paper entitled 'Heritage for Sale' Sara McDowell elaborated on the increasing commodification of conflict in the post-Belfast Agreement period. Emily Mark (UCD) shifted the geographical and thematic focus in an absorbing and geographically wide-ranging paper on the commemoration of Ireland's Great Famine.

Textual, rather than visual forms of representation were discussed in the session on 'Contemporary Fiction'. The work of John MacGahern was addressed in papers by Eamon Maher (DIT) and Stanley van der Ziel (UCD), while Tom Herron (Leeds Met) and Esther Aliaga (University of Ulster) spoke on aspects of the work of Seamus Deane and Glenn Patterson respectively. The third parallel session of the morning, 'Immigrant and Minorities' saw Brian Conway (Notre Dame) delve into the discursive construction of national identity in Irish newspapers during the period from 1996-2003, while Kevin Howard and Katy Hayward (UCD) explored the Irish state's new approach to the Irish Diaspora in Britain from the mid-1990s on. The session closed with a fine paper by Sean Crossan (NUIG) on contemporary Irish cinema which made much use of Appadurai's theory of 'ethnoscapes' in order to show that the large numbers of Irish films made throughout the 1990s and which focussed on Ireland's past were largely a product of the state's changing 'ethnoscape'.

Professor Bronwen Walter (Anglia Polytechnic University) delivered the second keynote address of the conference. In a paper entitled 'Exploring Diaspora Space: Entangled Irish/English Genealogies', she deftly disentangled for delegates the rather complex set of spatial, textual and temporal dimensions that characterise the Irish Diaspora in contemporary Britain. After lunch papers once again split into parallel groups. In sessions entitled 'Contemporary Drama', 'Inventing Traditions', 'Heritage and

Performance', 'Archaeology and Landscape', and 'Landscape, Memory and Text' delegates presented their findings on a diverse range of topics, including the mapping of language in Brian Friel's *Translations* (Nessa Cronin, NUI Galway), the 50th anniversary commemoration of the Easter Rising in 1966 (Roisin Higgins, UCD) and Leopold von Ranke's travel descriptions of Ireland in the 19th century (Andreas Boldt, NUI Maynooth). A high point of the afternoon was the premiere screening of Des Bell's latest film, 'Rebel Frontier'. Although Prof Bell (Napier University) could not be with us (he had a more pressing engagement in Hollywood with Martin Sheen who was recording the voiceover for the film!) the audience was enthralled by this enchanting film set in Butte, Montana in 1912-1917, a time when Irish and Finnish miners combined to advance the cause of labour and to connect their struggle to the struggle in their homelands for independence. Later that evening Prof Brian Graham hosted a pre-dinner wine reception, which was followed with a reading by the internationally acclaimed Irish writer, John McGahern. In what was for many delegates the highlight of the entire conference, McGahern gave an assured and masterful performance, captivating his audience with readings from *Amongst Women* and his latest novel, *That They May Face the Rising Sun*.

The final day of the conference got underway with sessions on 'Visual and Textual Representations of Ireland' and 'Social Spaces of Belfast'. Among

the topics presented were papers on the representation of Northern Irish landscapes in art (Eugene McNamee, UCC), ballads and performance in Irish cinema (Ruth Barton, UCD) and the architecture of interfaces in Belfast (Mark Hackett & Jurgen Patzak-Poor, University of Ulster). Proceedings were brought to fitting close with the final keynote address by the distinguished literary critic and John Rylands Fellow at the University of Manchester, Prof Terry Eagleton. Eagleton delivered an absorbing paper entitled 'History, Remembrance and Oblivion'.

The breadth of topics addressed during 'Ireland: Space, Text, Time' is without doubt testament to the enduring interest and vibrancy of current research in Irish Studies, both within and without the island. The conference also underscored the multidisciplinary nature of scholarly engagement with the concepts of space and time which are so central to our understanding of issues of place and identity in Ireland. Particularly impressive was the strength, number and quality of the contributions, as well as the blend of papers by established, emerging and postgraduate scholars, all of which augurs well for the future of research in Irish Studies. A collection of essays entitled *Ireland: Space, Text, Time* and based on the papers presented in Derry is currently being prepared for publication.

BRITISH ASSOCIATION FOR IRISH STUDIES NATIONAL COUNCIL

List of Members and Contact Details as of May 2004

Chair

Mervyn Busteed
School of Geography
University of Manchester
Oxford Road
Manchester
M13 9PL
Tel: 0161 275 3623
Fax: 0161 275 7878
E-mail: mervyn.busteed@man.ac.uk

Vice-Chair

Dr Siobhán Holland
School of Communication, Culture &
Creative Arts
St Mary's College
Waldegrave Road
Twickenham
TW1 4SX
Tel:
Fax:
E-mail: hollands@smuc.ac.uk

Treasurer

Dr Aidan Arrowsmith
Faculty of Arts, Media and Design
Staffordshire University
College Road
Stoke on Trent
ST4 2XW
Tel: 01782 294000
Fax: 0161 294 415
E-mail: A.Arrowsmith@staffs.ac.uk

Secretary

Dr Claire Connolly
Centre for Critical and Cultural Theory
Cardiff University
PO Box 94
Cardiff
CF10 3XB
Tel: 029 20258815
Fax: 044 29 20874502
E-mail: connolly@cardiff.ac.uk

Dr Scott Brewster

University of Central Lancashire
Department of Humanities
Fylde 409
Preston PR1 2HE
Tel: 01772 893022
Fax: 01772 892924
E-mail: sbrewster@uclan.ac.uk

Eleanor Burgess

'Mulberries'
Boreham
Essex
CM3 3DS
Tel: 012545 467 287

Dr Matthew Campbell

Department of English Literature,
University of Sheffield,
Sheffield
S10 2TN
Tel: 0114 222 8458
E-mail: m.campbell@sheffield.ac.uk

Mary Doran

Modern Irish Collections
The British Library
Great Russell Street
London
WC1B 3DG
Tel: 0171 412 7710

Christy Evans

Shenfield High School
Alexander Lane
Shenfield
Essex
CM15 8RY
Tel: 01277 219 131
Fax: 01277 226 422
E-mail: c.evans@shenfieldessexsch.co.uk

Seán Hutton

69a Balfour Street
London
SE17 1PL
Tel: 0207 703 5275
Fax: 0207 703 5275
E-mail: shuttonseanfile@aol.com

Dr Richard Kirkland

Department of English Language &
Literature
King's College London
Strand
London
WC2R 2LS
Tel: 0207 8482172
E-mail: richard.kirkland@kcl.ac.uk

Dr Catherine Nash

Department of Geography
Queen Mary, University of London
Mile End Road
London
E1 4NS
Tel: 020 7882 3153
Fax: 020 8981 6276
E-mail: c.nash@qmul.ac.uk

Prof Shaun Richards

Faculty of Arts, Media and Design
Staffordshire University
College Road
Stoke on Trent
ST4 2XW
Tel: 01782 294521
Fax: 01782 294760
E-mail: c.s.richards@staffs.ac.uk

Prof Neil Sammells

Bath Spa University College
Newton Park
Bath
BA2 9BN
Tel: 01225 875458
Fax: 01225 875496
E-mail: n.sammells@bathspa.ac.uk