



BRITISH ASSOCIATION FOR IRISH STUDIES

NEWS

February 2005

Dear Members

Please let me know if you have any material that you would like to be included in future editions of *BAIS News*. The next deadline for copy (in electronic form if possible) is **1 April 2005**.

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

Chair's Report to the 2004 Annual General Meeting of the British Association for Irish Studies, 29 January 2005

The past twelve months have been some of the busiest I can recall in almost ten years as a Council member and Officer of the Association. They were marked by ongoing progress in some areas and fresh developments in others. The Bursaries scheme, widely appreciated by researchers in Irish Studies, continued to attract high calibre applications and I would like to thank Richard Kirkland and the selection committee for their hard work. *Irish Studies Review* continued to go from strength to strength under the skilled editorship of Prof. Neil Sammells and Dr. Paul Hyland. This is indicated by the fact that the growing queue of manuscripts triggered the decision to go from three to four issues per annum. This was one factor which necessitated a decision to increase membership fees, a proposal overwhelmingly endorsed by a poll of the membership, who clearly recognise the bargain they receive. Christy Evans has continued his energetic work for the Irish language, helping to organise a series of enjoyable events where his skill as an enthusiastic teacher have been much appreciated.

The Newsletter has been replaced by the *BAIS News* under the skilled editorship of Catherine Nash. Our hope is that it will evolve a key element in diffusion of news about BAIS activities and Irish Studies events generally. The website has been moved to St Mary's College where it is managed by our energetic Vice Chair Siobhan Holland. Another notable new development is the Postgraduate Essay Competition launched under the guidance of Matthew Campbell. The prize for the winning essay is £500 of books from CUP and publication in *Irish Studies Review*. For the period 12-16 July we joined with our sister organisations in Canada and the USA for a joint conference hosted by the Institute of Irish Studies at the University of Liverpool. This highly successful event was probably the largest gathering of people interested in Irish studies to be held in Western Europe in recent years.

I would like to thank everyone who has served on the Council over the past year. Happily, everyone has been returned to serve for another two years. Eleanor Burgess and Shaun Richards continue to give us the benefit of their long experience of Irish Studies. We have also been joined by two new members, Maria Luddy and Ian McBride, and both have already made valuable contributions. I would particularly like to thank our Secretary Claire Connolly, not only for the fact that she has booked rooms and produced Agendas and Minutes but also for her imaginative and energetic work behind the scenes. She will be on maternity leave for much of 2005 and Scott Brewster has kindly agreed to step in as temporary replacement. I would also like to thank the Treasurer Aidan Arrowsmith for his care of the funds and his regular, lucid, financial reports. To help us focus on fund raising, Sean Hutton produced a Business Plan and this has provided a valuable framework for looking to the future. After providing us with much appreciated administrative back up for ten years, Sandy Trott has been replaced by Linda Christiansen of the Institute of Irish Studies at Liverpool, a most appropriate arrangement. We would also like to thank the Irish Ambassador and the staff at the Embassy for their ongoing support for the Association and its work.

Looking to the future, we are sponsoring a lecture by Prof. Roy Foster and Prof. Fintan Cullen at 1.10 p.m. on 10th March in the lecture theatre of the National Portrait Gallery. They are the curators of the exhibition *Conquering England: Ireland in Victorian London*, and the lecture will offer an overview of the exhibition and its contents. We are supporting the Irish Studies seminar series at the Institute of English Studies at London University, and there are plans to hold a joint conference with the Institute in June. Plans are also under way to organise a conference on *Irish Protestant Identities* with the Irish Studies centre at Salford University in September 2005. As members can see, we are actively pursuing our prime aim of encouraging and supporting the study of things Irish in Britain.

Mervyn Busted, Chair

BAIS ACTIVITIES



BRITISH ASSOCIATION
FOR IRISH STUDIES

POSTGRADUATE BURSARIES SCHEME
2005

The British Association for Irish Studies wishes to announce its 2005 bursary scheme to support Postgraduate research in Britain on topics of Irish interest. BAIS will award bursaries of £500 - £1000 each to postgraduate students registered at universities in England, Wales or Scotland conducting research on any aspect of Irish Studies. Students may use the bursary for travel expenses, payment of fees, subsistence or other expenses related to the completion of their research projects. Applicants must be members of the British Association for Irish Studies (or should join when they apply).

Applicants will be required to submit a completed Application Form together with completed forms from two referees who will be required to send these direct to the Chair of the Bursaries Committee. Deadline for submission of Applications: **11 March 2005**

The awards will be announced in May 2005. The decision of the BAIS Postgraduate Bursaries Committee will be final.

How to Apply: Please email richard.kirkland@kcl.ac.uk for an Application Pack.

For more information please contact the Chair of the Bursaries Committee: Dr Richard Kirkland, Department of English, King's College London, Strand, London, WC2R 2LS, (0207) 8482172, richard.kirkland@kcl.ac.uk

BAIS LECTURE

The Irish presence in Victorian London: cultural, artistic, political

The curators of

'Conquering England': Ireland in Victorian London

National Portrait Gallery, London, 9th March to 19th June 2005

Fintan Cullen and **Roy Foster** offer an overview of the exhibition and its contents.

1.10pm, March 10th 2005, National Portrait Gallery (in the Gallery's lecture theatre)

Sponsored by the British Association for Irish Studies

<http://www.npg.org.uk>

FORTHCOMING EVENTS



LIMINAL IRISH IDENTITIES
18th–20th March, 2005
University College Dublin, Ireland.

This interdisciplinary conference investigates the identity formation of marginal voices in Ireland. Focusing on the 'double vision' of immigrants and minority groups in their interaction with "mainstream" narratives, the conference engages with literary, historical, and social perspectives of displacement and integration. Paper will address:

Immigration (race, language, religion, memory, interculturalism, discrimination, assimilation), **Social exclusion** (class, poverty, health, age, disability, travelling community), **Gender discrimination** (women, gays and lesbians)

'Double Vision' seeks to provide a forum for researchers in several disciplines, including literary studies, film and theatre studies, history, sociology, law, politics, and fine arts.

ORGANIZERS Borbála Faragó (borbala.farago@ucd.ie) University College Dublin, School of English, John Henry Newman Building, Belfield, Dublin 4, Ireland, and Moynagh Sullivan (moynagh.sullivan@may.ie) Department of English, NUI Maynooth, Co. Kildare, Ireland

www.doublevisionconference.com

IRISH LANGUAGE

BAIS members have been busy recently promoting the Irish language. Eleanor Burgess helped organise the 3rd International Festival of the Irish Language on Guernsey. Further gatherings at Durham and Fron Goch in Wales will follow.

Meanwhile, Christy Evans is teaching Irish to children and adults in schools and nightclasses in Essex. BAIS members founded Coláiste na nGael – a group that has a growing number of young students interested in Irish. All types of people and all ages are expressing a new interest in the Irish language. BAIS members have played a key role in this area of Irish studies in Britain.



Alison Dalleywater, London-born member of Coláiste na nGael.

CONFERENCE REPORTS

Joint conference of The American Conference for Irish Studies, the British Association of Irish Studies and the European Federation of Associations and Centres of Irish Studies

Liverpool, 2004

Moynagh Sullivan (NUI Maynooth)

From July 12-16, the Institute of Irish Studies at the University of Liverpool hosted the joint conference of The American Conference for Irish Studies, the British Association of Irish Studies and the European Federation of Associations and Centres of Irish Studies. This international conference, which attracted over 250 delegates sought to provide a forum in which all dimensions of Irish studies could be discussed. Given the various bodies involved in the conference, no single theme had been selected for the conference, but interesting patterns emerged throughout, and repeated themes or concerns typically centred on Emigration and Displacement (William Jenkins' paper 'Networks, Mobility, and Identity Among the Irish in the United States and Canada: Case Studies of Buffalo and Toronto, 1880-1910'). There was considerable emphasis given to the Irish America and the Irish in America (Geraldine Higgins's paper on the semiotics of Irish studies in America, as well as Ron Ebest's paper on Irish-American writings, and the sessions on 'The Irish in South America', and 'More Than Mere Shamrockery: Irish America in the Twentieth Century'), the Irish Diaspora elsewhere, (Edward Kelly, "Irish Studies in Eastern Europe", and Irene Martyniuk, "Colonial Connections: Reading Irish and Ukrainian Literature Through Each Other"), and the Irish in England (Tony Murray, "London Irish Fictions: Examining the Literature of the Irish in London"). Gender, was another recurrent theme, with a number of papers exploring how Irish masculinities are constructed and how often these are bound up with national consciousness, such as Adam Chill's "Showing the 'Signs of Manhood': Irish Nationalism and Gender in Liverpool, 1820-1845", Mary McGlynn's "Urban Macho: Textual Experimentation and the Vernacular in Bolger, Bateman, McNamee, and Wilson", and Graham Walker's "Belfast, Boys and Books: The Friendship between Forrest Reid and Knox Cunningham", Kathryn A. Conrad's "Queer Eye for the Straight Guy: Surveillance and Desire in Birkett's *Ulster Alien* and Morrison's *On the Back of the Swallow*". A number of other papers examined how feminine identities are so often bound up with

place and figured as boundaries and land, and they looked at how immigration can undo this cathexis. These papers included Brenda Gray's "Mobility, Belonging and the Gendered Promise of Global Irish Modernity", Yvonne McKenna's "Embodied Ideals and Realities – Irish Woman Religious, Womanhood, and Gendered Subjectivities", and Louise Ryan's "Beyond National Boundaries: Women, Migration and Unwanted Pregnancy". The theme of gender was carried on in a number of papers that examined the body, and the body politic, as did Scott Brewster's, "Rites of Defilement: Abjection and the Body Politic in Northern Irish Poetry", the panel on 'Women's Bodies: Public and Private Worlds' and Eibhlin Evans's lively paper, "'Platonic My Eye': An Examination of the Encoding of the Female Body in Contemporary Irish Women's Poetry").

Other topics covered included the troubles in Northern Ireland were addressed in a number of contexts such as Robert Andrew Nowlan's paper on 'Inspector Rebus' and the troubles, as was Partition in the session on 'Contemporary Debates: North and South', and Travellers (Mary Burke's paper on Irish Traveller Literature, and the Conventional Irish Studies Syllabus). Other sessions dealt with 'Celtic languages', 'Nineteenth Century Irish History', 'The Irish Free State', Irish Miners at Home and Abroad', 'The 1798 Rebellion', 'The Irish Theatre in Britain', 'Ireland in the 1930s', 'Twentieth Century Writing', 'Issues in Contemporary Ireland', and 'Publishing in Ireland'.

Protestant identity was addressed in Gillian O'Brien's paper on the Protestant ascendancy post union), and by Douglas Archibald in his paper the "The Curious Incident of William Trevor and Irish Studies", which raised an important question about who gets to be Irish in the versions of Irish Studies currently being practiced when he noted William Trevor's precarious placing in the Irish Studies constellation of nationally approved stars. There was a most welcome move away from the monolithic short handing of Protestantism that characterises a lot of early Irish studies criticism. Such critical perspectives are subtended by a nationalist progressivism which 'traces' declines and falls as seemingly natural events, and which owe much, (despite a common tendency to disavow theory) to Marxism and the march of history. A multicultural Ireland, at home and abroad, cannot be a reality until the republic can finally deal respectfully with the minorities present in the state from before its beginnings, and its others north of the border. Many of the papers and panels in this conference augur a move in the right direction. An excellent panel chaired by David Miller called 'Friends for Life: Ireland's Religious Society of Friends and Social Change in Irish Society', examined the quite considerable, and for the most part unacknowledged,

contributions of Irish Quakers to the Island's life and economy. It included papers on "Friends and Radicalism, 1776-1815" by Kevin O'Neill, "Dr. Ethel Bentham and the Quaker Contribution to Irish Medicine" by Margaret Ó hÓgartaigh and "A Lifelong Commitment: Quaker Women and Charitable Activism in Nineteenth Century Dublin" by Margaret Preston'.

These various themes were explored across a pleasingly interdisciplinary range of genres. These included readings in the well established interpretative spaces of Drama, Poetry and Prose, (A number of authors had whole panels dedicated to their work such as William Trevor, Brian Mahon, and Seamus Heaney, and there a panel on revival drama, as well as one on Wilde and Swift), Music (there was a panel on 'Classical and Popular Music', as well as a number of papers that explored the role of music in film and politics such as Christopher Smith's analysis of the deployment of traditional Irish music in *Titanic*, and Peter Mills's "Into the Misty: Van Morrison and Irish Cinematic Lyricism"; Folklore (Patricia A. Lynch, "Examination of a Collection of Medical Recipes in the Manuscripts of Two Folk Doctors"), Politics, Economics and History. These genres extended to spaces being newly explored as repositories of symbolic practices and narratives like Film, a paper such as Gerardine Meaney's "The Sons of Cuchulainn: Violence, the Family, and the Irish Canon", explored the intersection between film, theatre and literature and there was a session on 'Irish Cinema: Historical Recoveries and Musical Translations', which included a paper by Ruth Barton on The Cinema as Site of Resistance: Re-viewing Ireland in the 1930s"; Photography – there was a panel called 'Constructing History: the Function of the Archive in Post-Conflict Belfast'; Urban Space (Justin Carville's "The City in Ruins: Photography, Modernity and the Visualization of the 1916 Easter Rebellion"); Landscape, (a session on landscapes and desires and Gillian McIntosh's paper "Stormont: Symbols and Space"); Cyberspace (Lance Pettitt, "Before Cyber Queers: Gay Print Culture in Ireland", and the session on 'Virtual Ireland', which had Matthew Jockers talk about, "Making and Mining a Digital Archive: The Case of *The Irish-American West*", Gerry Slater and Hugh Campbell talk about "Identity and Protest: The Ulster Covenant of Northern Ireland", and Susan Schreibman described "The Thomas MacGreevy Archive: From Pages to Pixels"); Media, Popular Culture and Art (Riann Coulter "Striking a New Note in Irish Art: The Irish Exhibition of Living Art, 1943"). Perspectives from such diverse populations and in such assorted subject areas meant that a number of most interesting new methodologies and perspectives showed how Irish studies is moving beyond the Irish-English binary that had tiresomely dominated it for so long. Many of the papers explored in historical as well as contemporary contexts how the normative cultural practices and commentaries that establish some identities as more Irish than others, as well as the costs paid by those whose identities are not incorporated into the national, such that it is, body.

If there was a containing theme, then it would loosely have been about asking what Irish Studies has come to mean in a number of very different international contexts, most particularly in the circumstances of the institutional practices and histories

associated with Irish Studies such as Bernadette Murphy's paper on "Family History Research and Irish Studies: Exploring the Relationship". Much early work in Irish Studies was inflected with an anxious insistence on the value and difference of Irishness, with proving Irish identity existed at all through elaborating its differences from Britain. A number of papers at this conference examined the mechanisms by which such identities were asserted, such as, the session on 'Inventing Irish Identities' and that on 'Cultural Myth and Literary Allusion in Contemporary Irish Writing', in which papers by Kristine Byron, Thomas F. Shea, and Moira E. Casey questioned a number of prevailing populist myths of Irish identity, and a session on 'Queering Irish Writing' during which Claire Connolly 'Queered Irish Nationalism' and Vera Kreilkamp queered Irish literary history.

The plenary talks also dealt with the cultural and self-reflexive dimensions to Irish identity that distinguished so many of the delegates paper. These featured Nicholas Canny, who spoke on "Fashions and Foibles in Recent Writing on the History of Modern Ireland", Edna Longley who talked us "Back in the 1960s: Belfast Poets, Liverpool Poets", Paul Arthur's who mapped out the "The future and the past. The changing landscape of the Ulster question"; Séamas Ó Catháin, who made connections between Scandinavia and Ireland in "Anxious to Learn, Willing to Work": The Nordic Apprenticeship of J. H. Delargy (S. O Duilearga)", and Prof. T. M. Devine who compared Irish and Scot's experience in: "The Emigrant Experience: Scots and Irish Catholics in the USA", and Professor Joe Lee asked what "National Scholarship in a Global Age" means. The plenary round tables were distinguished by lively discussions, and were notable for how cultural considerations were eclipsed by politics and economics, topics included 'The IRA Apology of 2002 and Forgiveness in Northern Ireland's Troubles', 'Business and economic relations: Ireland, Britain and Europe, Reassurance, Identity, and Irishness', 'The media and Ireland', 'Contemporary Irish women's writing', and Irish Studies today.

Wonderful entertainment laid on by the conference organisers and the university was kicked off on the first night with a welcome by Prof. Drummond Bone, Vice-Chancellor of the University of Liverpool, and a reception hosted by the University of Liverpool, and continued in this generous vein as receptions on successive evenings and afternoons were hosted by his Excellency the Ambassador of Ireland, Mr Dáithí O Ceallaigh, BAIS, the Institute of Irish Studies, Liverpool City Council, and Tourism Ireland. Other entertainment included the Irish Heritage Tour, poetry readings by Ciaran Carson and Eileán Ní Chuilleánáin, and the successful finale to the conference, the banquet, which was addressed by Tom Paulin. All in all, the conference was distinguished by a number of highly theorised and intellectually complex approaches, as well as new subject matters and cultural readings, and its many considered and nuanced debates, which took place not only in the panels, but on green, in the restaurants and bars, avoided the often evangelical zeal of the idealist impetus that has characterised so much early Irish studies work.

KEOUGH INSTITUTE FOR IRISH STUDIES UNIVERSITY OF NOTRE DAME

The first issue of the FIELD DAY REVIEW, a new annual journal edited by Seamus Deane and Breandán Mac Suibhne, will be published in Spring 2005. It will contain an outstanding range of essays, essay-reviews, reviews, photo-essays and other features, almost all centred on various aspects of Irish political and literary culture, past and present. The new journal will be launched at the 43rd Annual Meeting of The American Conference for Irish Studies, April 14-17, 2005, The Keough Institute for Irish Studies, University of Notre Dame.