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CENTER FOR IRISH PROGRAMS

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IRISH STUDIES

Burns Visiting Scholar, Fall 2018 Semester



Professor Ciaran O'Neill

Boston College is pleased to welcome Professor Ciaran O'Neill, Ussher Assistant Professor in Nineteenth-Century History at Trinity College Dublin, as the Fall 2018 Burns Visiting Scholar.

Prior to his appointment in 2011, Professor O'Neill was Government of Ireland Senior Scholar at Hertford College, University of Oxford, and trained at the National University of Ireland Galway before undertaking a Ph.D. at the University of Liverpool.

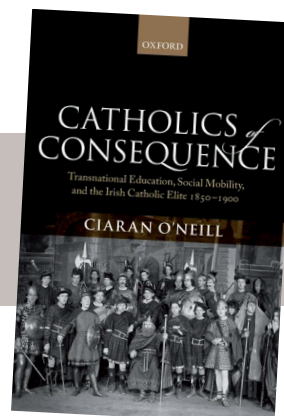
Ciaran's first book, *Catholics of Consequence: Transnational Education, Social Mobility, and the Irish Catholic Elite 1850–1900*, was published by Oxford University Press in 2014 and won the Donnelly

Prize for the best book published in history or the social sciences at the American Conference for Irish Studies in 2015. In 2013 he edited *Irish Elites in the Nineteenth Century* for Four Courts Press. He co-edits the Reappraisals in Irish History series for Liverpool University Press along with Professor Enda Delaney and Professor Maria Luddy, and has served as president for the Society for the Study of Nineteenth Century Ireland 2014–18.

Recent work appears in *Eire-Ireland*, *Gender & History*, *The Public Historian*, and *Historical Research* as well as the *Cambridge History of Ireland* (2018), and the *Cambridge Social History of Ireland* (2017). His current work revolves around questions of public history, modern Irish and British literature, history and fiction, and the social and cultural history of Ireland, Britain, and the Empire in the nineteenth century.

While at Boston College, he will be working on a book about power while teaching a course on history and fiction. This latter research interest will be the basis for a daylong symposium planned for early December 2018.

Ciaran's
first
book



“Is There an American School of Irish History?”

A one-day symposium organized by Professor Jason Knirck, BC’s Burns Visiting Scholar for the spring 2018 semester, was held April 7 at Connolly House under the title “Is There an American School of Irish History?” A variety of modern Irish historians, trained and working in American universities, met to consider the state of the field, the role of Irish history in the American academy, and the future of the field in the United States as well as to hear examples of recent research by American scholars. Presenters ranged from tenured professors to current graduate students to recently hired tenure-track faculty. Presentations focused on the ways in which modern Irish history is being used to explore questions of gender, Empire, revolution, and national identity. Specific topics included female emigration in the nineteenth-century empire, the position of Dublin as an anticolonial metropole in the twentieth century, and the experiences of women in the Richmond lunatic asylum in the aftermath of the Easter Rising. The conference concluded with a roundtable discussion by presenters, Boston College Irish history graduate students, Irish history and literature faculty from other universities, and interested members of the public on the state of the field in the American academy.

The John J. Burns Library of Rare Books, Special Collections, and Archives

Boston *Pilot* “Information Wanted” Advertisements Now on Dataverse

A copious dataset containing nearly 40 years of newspaper advertisements documenting Irish immigration through Boston is now freely available for download from the Boston College Libraries’ new open access data repository hosted on Harvard University’s Dataverse platform.

From 1831 through 1921, the Boston-based *Pilot* newspaper printed a “Missing Friends” column with advertisements from people looking for “lost” friends

and relatives who had emigrated from Ireland to the United States. Ruth-Ann Mellish Harris, who started an Irish Studies program at Northeastern University before coming to Boston College, co-edited an eight-volume compilation of these advertisements, published in 1989 by the New England Historic Genealogical Society. In 2005, Boston College launched “Information Wanted: A Database of Advertisements for Irish Immigrants Published in the Boston *Pilot*,” a website resource that drew on Harris’s work. The online version included 41,249 records representing advertisements from 1831 through 1869, thus encompassing both the Great Irish Famine and the US Civil War.

The original “Information Wanted” project had to be decommissioned this summer due to network security concerns over its older programming architecture, so BC Libraries migrated the complete dataset to its new Dataverse repository, linked from the Libraries’ website. Dataverse is an open source web application, developed at Harvard’s Institute for Quantitative Social Science, to share, preserve, cite, explore, and analyze research data. The entire dataset may now be freely downloaded from <https://dataverse.harvard.edu/dataverse/bc>.

The Dataverse migration was performed by the Libraries’ Digital Scholarship team in collaboration with Irish Studies librarian Kathleen Williams, who retired at the end of June after 30 years of service. With the help of numerous student assistants, Williams prepared thousands of entries for the “Information Wanted” database. A capstone to her efforts, Williams presented the project at the recent American Conference for Irish Studies annual meeting at University College Cork as part of a digital showcase session that also included a demonstration of the online Séamus Connolly Music Collection by Irish music librarian Elizabeth Sweeney.

Great Famine Voices Roadshow

On April 11, Burns Library provided the Boston venue for the Great Famine Voices Roadshow—a series of open house events across the United States and Canada that brought together Irish emigrants, their descendants, and members of their communities to share family memories and stories of coming from Ireland to North America, especially during the period of the Great Hunger and afterwards. More than 60 people from around the Boston area attended the



event, a dozen of whom contributed their voices and stories to the video archive that is now available from the Roadshow website at <http://greatfaminevoices.ie/>.

The evening in Burns Library included short talks by Roadshow organizers Christine Kinealy, founding director of Ireland's Great Hunger Institute at Quinnipiac University, and Caroilín Callery, a director of the Irish National Famine Museum in Strokestown Park. It also featured presentations by John Foley about efforts to establish a memorial to the hundreds of Irish Famine-era emigrants who died in quarantine on Deer Island in Boston Harbor, and by Ellen Alden, a local author who has published an award-winning historical novel based on letters by her great-great-grandfather, a Famine-era immigrant to Massachusetts who later fought for the Union during the American Civil War.

The Roadshow also made stops in New York, New Haven, Philadelphia, San Francisco, Toronto, and Montreal. It was funded by the Government of Ireland Emigrant Support Programme. The Roadshow website is hosted by the National Famine Museum and the Irish Heritage Trust, an independent charity. It features more than 90 video-recorded interviews.

Joe Derrane and His Gaillard Accordion

The Burns Library Irish Music Archives has acquired Joe Derrane's D/C# Gaillard accordion, a gift from his children, Joseph P. Derrane, Jr., and Sheila A. Harvey. The instrument is the second button accordion that Derrane commissioned from Bertrand Gaillard, a French accordion maker.



Boston-based Joe Derrane (1930–2016), an Irish-American musician and composer, was well known for his innovative approach to the D/C# button accordion in Irish traditional music. From the mid-1940s to around 1960, he performed Irish traditional music in a wide range of venues across Boston, appearing frequently in bands in the Dudley Street dance halls. Copley Records first invited him to record commercially while he was a high school senior, and he went on to record with collaborators such as his mentor, Jerry O'Brien.

Between 1962 and 1989, while holding various administrative positions at the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA), Derrane performed jazz, pop, and repertoires from other ethnic traditions. In 1993, when Rego Irish Records and Tapes obtained the rights to re-release his early 78-rpm recordings on CD, Derrane's music was heard by many for the first time. The CD caught the attention of journalist Earle Hitchner, who interviewed Derrane and persuaded him to try the button accordion again. Within months, he gave a highly successful performance at Virginia's 1994 Wolf Trap Festival. This pivotal event brought Derrane back into a new phase of recording, teaching, and international performance in Irish music.



In April, Burns Library hosted a luncheon with members of the Derrane family to celebrate Derrane's legacy and the donation of his accordion. Also present was Séamus Connolly, former Sullivan Artist in Residence in Irish Music at Boston College and long-time friend and musical colleague of Derrane's. The instrument, now retired from playing, is on display in the Burns Library Irish Room alongside books, paintings, harps, and other items from the Library's Irish collections.

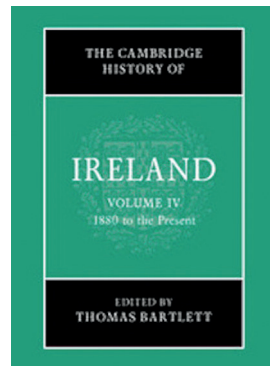
Cambridge History of Ireland Launch

On Thursday, September 20, Burns Library will host a launch of *Cambridge History of Ireland*, edited under the general direction of Thomas Bartlett, emeritus

professor, University of Aberdeen, and 2009–2010 Burns Visiting Scholar in Irish Studies. The program will include remarks by individual volume editors and a speaker to be announced. Additional launch events are being planned for the same week in New York City and Washington, DC, in conjunction with the Embassy of Ireland.

The initial launch was held at Dublin Castle on April 30, at a ceremony moderated by Caitriona Crowe of the Royal Irish Academy with remarks by President Michael D. Higgins. Liz Friend Smith, commissioning editor at Cambridge University Press, noted the high degree of interest in Irish history, having published Bartlett's bestselling *Ireland: A History* in 2010. No comprehensive edited collection of essays on Irish history had appeared since Oxford University Press issued its nine-volume New History of Ireland series between 1976 and 2006.

Among the more than 100 contributors to the four-volume *Cambridge History of Ireland* are Boston College Professors Kevin Kenny and Robert Savage and former and future Burns Visiting Scholars Guy Beiner, Paul Bew, Alvin Jackson, Ciaran O'Neill, and Colmán Ó Clabaigh, OSB.



“Insidious Vulnerability: Women’s Grief and Trauma in Modern and Contemporary Irish Fiction”

Trista Doyle’s doctoral dissertation “Insidious Vulnerability: Women’s Grief and Trauma in Modern and Contemporary Irish Fiction,” presented in May of this year, examines individual experiences of grief and trauma in Irish writing from 1935 to 2013, focusing specifically on novels by Elizabeth Bowen, Samuel Beckett, Sebastian Barry, and Eimear McBride. It offers a feminist reclamation of personal forms of loss that fall outside the purview of documented history and that typically go overlooked in literary criticism.



Examples in this study include suffering caused by the natural death of a family member, infertility, domestic and sexual abuse, social ostracism, institutionalization, and forced adoption. In conversation with trauma theory, Irish memory studies, and recent work on modernism and its afterlives, Doyle performs careful close readings of Bowen’s *The House in Paris* (1935) and *The Death of the Heart* (1938), Beckett’s *Molloy* (1955), Barry’s *The Secret Scripture* (2008), and McBride’s *A Girl Is a Half-Formed Thing* (2013). She reads against the grain of existing criticism to reveal the depth and complexity of grief in these works—showing how they make visible forms of loss and violence that society tends to ignore, work through what impedes the grieving process, and give voice to underrepresented experiences of emotional and psychological suffering.

Boston College-Ireland

The William B. Neenan, S.J. Visiting Fellowship at Boston College-Ireland

Applications are invited for the 2019 William B. Neenan, S.J. Visiting Fellowship at Boston College-Ireland. The Fellowship is named to honor the work of Fr. William B. Neenan, who came to Boston College in 1979 as the inaugural Thomas I. Gasson Professor. From 1980 to 1987, Neenan served as dean of the College of Arts and Sciences before assuming the role of academic vice president and dean of faculties. During his tenure, the University established itself among the nation’s top institutions of higher education. From 1998, he served as vice president and special assistant to the president. Sadly, Fr. Neenan passed away in 2014.

The Fellowship is open to scholars working in the field of Irish Studies and requires that a period of time be spent in Dublin while conducting research. The Fellowship must be held for a minimum of six weeks and may be held at any time during the 2019 calendar year. The holder of the Fellowship will be awarded a

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stipend of €5000, with access to the Boston College-Ireland building, an office, and administrative support. In addition, Boston College-Ireland will work with the Visiting Fellow to organize a one-day symposium that will include a number of invited speakers and will be arranged around the research interests of the Fellow.

The closing date for Fellowship applications is December 3, 2018. To apply, please send your curriculum vitae, an explanation of the research you wish to undertake in Ireland, and details of proposed outputs to Professor Mike Cronin, croninmr@bc.edu.

Comhfhios: A graduate student-sponsored conference at Boston College

In February 2018, Irish Studies launched Comhfhios Boston College—a conference both new and, in a way, old to Connolly House. Irish Studies Ph.D. students in the English and history departments joined together to reignite a Boston College tradition from a decade prior: a graduate student Irish Studies conference, sponsored by the Center for Irish Programs. We named the conference “Comhfhios,” meaning, in Irish, “knowledge together” or “open to all knowledge”—a name chosen for its literal meaning to invite a collaborative discourse on Irish Studies between faculty and students across the New England area. The conference was designed to be interdisciplinary, to put all kinds of perspectives on Irishness in conversation with each other, and to emphasize innovative approaches to Irish Studies. Our inaugural 2018 theme was “Living Irishness,” which raised various theoretical inquiries into Irish culture, such as feminist material, or ecological perspectives while also reinvigorating older debates like nationalism.

With nearly 60 people in attendance, Comhfhios was a great success. It generated a number of rich conversations as well as important connections between faculty and graduate students. The day began with three graduate student conference papers, presented by Bridget Keown (Northeastern), Tracy Anne Travis (Penn State Harrisburg), and Sarah Kimball (NYU), covering topics from gender and trauma in 1916 to American Irish music and Busch Gardens’ Killarney Town as cultural artifact. These were followed by three more exemplary graduate

student papers, given by Megan Holly (BC), Ruby Harris-Gavin (NYU), and Sarah Churchill (Housatonic Community College), on Seamus Deane and Colum McCann, the decline of forests in Ireland, and finally, Irish dance costumery. The breadth and diversity of the student papers not only achieved the Comhfhios goal of an interdisciplinary conference but also enlivened the academic environment in Connolly House, as faculty became the students, asking questions about disciplines outside their own expertise. As became evident in the Q and A, these panels spotlighted topics little discussed in Irish Studies circles, such as fashion and ecology.

Perhaps the most important part of the day was the co-current afternoon roundtables, where faculty and students freely and casually discussed prominent topics in Irish Studies research. One roundtable covered the topic of “Living Feminism” while the other addressed “Ireland(s): Living the State.” Universities represented included BC, Holy Cross, UConn, Central Washington, UMass Amherst, Framingham State, and UMass Boston. Each roundtable was composed of six official participants, three professors, and three graduate students, but each conversation naturally extended out to spectators in the audience. At this point in the afternoon, the idea of “Comhfhios,” knowledge together, truly came to life as curiosity and passion for the topics naturally deconstructed the professor/student hierarchy. These friendly, excited discussions covered topics like Repeal the 8th, Brexit, motherhood, the Troubles, the representation of the Irish nation, and women writers.

The true highlight of the day was keynote speaker Angela Bourke, whose reputation drew faculty, undergraduates, and local Bostonians to Connolly House. Head of Modern Irish Emeritus at University College Dublin and a member of the Royal Irish Academy, Bourke is best known for *The Burning of Bridget Cleary* (1999), which is a standard text in Irish Studies courses. Her talk, Finding the Story, covered pieces of her new research project on folktale collectors the Curtins, and she spoke to the graduate students in attendance, encouraging them to locate a captivating story within their own research projects. Following Bourke’s inspiring keynote and a lengthy question and answer session, the day concluded with a reception in Connolly House.

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What Comhfhios demonstrated, most of all, is that Irish Studies is a rich, youthful, ever-growing, and ever-regenerating discipline. The fresh perspectives and excited energy at this conference were undeniable. The day provided varied opportunities for graduate students, including the chance to meet faculty and publishers. It also forged connections and provided lessons for every attendee, as everyone encountered at least one new perspective over the course of the day. The graduate student organizing committee at Boston College (Colleen Taylor, Rachael Young, Michael Bailey, Megan Crotty, and Alicia Oh) intends to make Comhfhios



an annual event and will begin planning our second annual conference in the fall. The committee will propose a roundtable at ACIS Boston in March 2019 to get even more participants involved.

Lastly, we hope to host the conference in Ireland in the future to generate discourse not only between American graduate students and faculty but also between Irish postgrads and Americans working in Irish Studies so the “knowledge together” practice extends internationally.

If you would like to get involved or participate in Comhfhios, please contact Colleen Taylor at taylorft@bc.edu.

BOSTON COLLEGE CENTER FOR IRISH PROGRAMS

The Boston College Center for Irish Programs is headquartered in Connolly House on the University’s Chestnut Hill Campus. The Center includes BC’s Irish Studies Program, the Irish Institute, Boston College-Ireland on St. Stephen’s Green in Dublin, and the Burns Library’s Irish Collections.

In addition to providing administrative support and program coordination for each of these units, the Center also serves as an umbrella under which any Irish-related activities on each of the Boston College campuses may obtain resource assistance.

For more information, please contact: Irish Studies at Boston College, Connolly House, 300 Hammond Street, Chestnut Hill, MA 02467, 617-552-6396, or e-mail irish@bc.edu. See our website at www.bc.edu/irish. *Irish Studies* is edited by Joan Reilly.