

and will return in the not-too-distant future.



## North East Irish Culture Network

Newsletter – June, 2006

### Fáilte romhat!

Dear Members,

A lot has happened in the past year since NEICN's inception in November, 2005. We have held, and we continue to hold lectures, conferences and symposia for scholars, students, teachers and other interested parties. We sincerely hope that NEICN members will continue to attend. We also hope that you will circulate news of the network to those people you feel may be interested in becoming a member.

NEICN supports the study of all aspects of Irish literature, history and culture, including film, music and the visual arts. Although its base is in the North East of England, at the University of Sunderland and the University of Durham, it has strongly international, as well as regional, interests in the promotion and development of Irish Studies.

As part of our commitment to the development of Irish Studies we have hosted in the following events:

#### *Visit of Professor Andrew Carpenter*

The North East Irish Culture Network at the Universities of Sunderland and Durham hosted Professor Andrew Carpenter, (University College, Dublin) on 21<sup>st</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup> February, 2006. Professor Carpenter offered two brilliantly witty and insightful papers on 21st February, at the University of Sunderland, and 22<sup>nd</sup> February at the University of Durham. Both were extremely well attended and received, and we understand that Andrew enjoyed his time with us in the north-east

#### **ST PATRICK'S EVE PARTY**

We were delighted to welcome members, students of both universities and other interested parties to an evening of poetry readings, music and excellent 'craic' on the eve of St Patrick's Day, Thursday March, 16<sup>th</sup> the Birley Room in Hatfield College, Durham University.

We celebrated the evening with excellent and well-received readings of Yeats by Professor Michael O'Neill; Heaney and Cavanagh by Dr Gareth Reeves, and a delightful rendition of Joyce's *Gas From a Burner* by Dr Matthew Creasy. We also had traditional Irish music and the odd drop of 'falling down water'. This is an event that we shall certainly repeat, and one to which you are all cordially invited.

#### **VISIT OF PROFESSOR WILLY MALEY**

## FORTHCOMING EVENTS

### DURHAM JOYCE READING GROUP IN ASSOCIATION WITH THE NORTH-EAST IRISH CULTURE NETWORK



On Wednesday, 29<sup>th</sup> March NEICN were delighted to welcome Professor Willy Maley to deliver a paper entitled "A Few Shakes of a Bard's Tale: Recent Irish Appropriations of Shakespeare". Again this was very well attended. Students, colleagues and members of the public were captivated by Willy's witty delivery of a highly erudite and entertaining paper subtitled: 'Brush up your Erse'. Willy will be returning to the north-east to deliver a paper at the Joyce forum on July 10<sup>th</sup>.

#### POETRY READING

On Friday 16 June 2006, we welcomed Michael O'Neill, (University of Durham), and Kevin Cadwallender to a poetry reading event at which they read from a selection of their poems at the National Glass Centre, University of Sunderland. This was another well-attended and highly enjoyable event.

Michael O'Neill is a published poet who has also published extensively in the field of Romanticism. He is regularly involved in poetry readings.

Kevin Cadwallender, a graduate of the University of Sunderland, is a published poet and film maker, who has been poet in residence for, among others Durham County Council Arts, Libraries and Museums, and James Cook University Hospital.

We are hoping to host similar events at both institutions in the coming year, and again you are cordially invited to join us.

#### James Joyce Study Day

10<sup>th</sup> July 2006 Plenary Speaker: Fritz Senn, International Joyce Foundation, Zurich  
Round-table featuring Derek Attridge, Richard Brown, Willy Maley, Stephen Regan, Fritz Senn and Patricia Waugh  
Panel Speakers: Matthew Bevis, Matthew Creasy, Jim Davies, Katy Mullin, Vike Plock and Conor Wyer

10am – 6pm

Leech Hall, St John's College  
3 South Bailey, Durham

Registration fee: £15 – Students  
£20 – Non-students

For further information contact: Professor Stephen Regan

([stephen.regan@durham.ac.uk](mailto:stephen.regan@durham.ac.uk))

Dr Matthew Creasy

([matthew.creasy@durham.ac.uk](mailto:matthew.creasy@durham.ac.uk))

Dr Vike Plock ([v.m.plock@durham.ac.uk](mailto:v.m.plock@durham.ac.uk))

#### *Joyce Forum and Reading Group*

NEICN will be continuing to support the Joyce reading group hosted by the University of Durham in the coming months. For further details, please contact Stephen Regan on  
[stephen.regan@durham.ac.uk](mailto:stephen.regan@durham.ac.uk)

#### FOURTH ANNUAL IRISH STUDIES CONFERENCE

The University of Sunderland  
In Association with the North East  
Irish Culture Network

Fourth Annual Irish Studies Conference

10-12 November 2006

***The Word, The Icon and The Ritual  
[iii] -Ireland - Renaissance, Revolution,  
Regeneration.***

Following the success of its last three international conferences: *Representing-Ireland: Past, Present and Future*, [2003] and *The Word, The Icon and The Ritual*, [2004], and *Lands of Saints of Scholars*, [2005] the University of Sunderland, in association with NEICN, is soliciting papers for an interdisciplinary conference, which will run from 10-12 November 2006.

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 particularly welcome proposals for panels. As with previous year's conference, we welcome submissions for panels and papers under the thematic headings of: *Ireland - Renaissance, Revolution, Regeneration* in the following areas: Literature, Performing Arts, History, Politics, Folklore and Mythology, Ireland in Theory, Gender and Ireland Anthropology, Sociology, Geography, Tourism, Art and Art History, Music, Dance, Media and Film Studies, Cultural Studies, and Studies of the Diaspora. North American and other international scholars, practitioners in the arts, and postgraduate students are all encouraged to submit proposals to the conference organisers. We also welcome proposals for papers *in absentia* for delegates who wish to participate but may find it difficult to attend the event.

The last three conferences have resulted in the publication of a selection of essays, and we hope to continue this with essays from this year's conference.

This year we will have over 100 speakers in an international event that will include a book launch, traditional music and dance, drama and a ceilidh.

**Confirmed Plenary Speakers Include:**

**Ailbhe Smyth – University College,  
Dublin**

Mervyn Busted – University of  
Manchester

**Tony Hepburn – University of  
Sunderland**

**Siobhan Kilfeather – Q.U.B**

**Richard Terry – University of  
Sunderland**

**Gareth Reeves – University of Durham**

**Proposals of not more than 500 words  
should be sent by 21st July 2006 at the  
latest to either of the organisers:**

**Dr Alison O'Malley-Younger –  
[alison.younger@sunderland.ac.uk](mailto:alison.younger@sunderland.ac.uk)**

**Professor Stephen Regan –  
[stephen.regan@durham.ac.uk](mailto:stephen.regan@durham.ac.uk)**

**And copied to the conference  
administrator, Ms Susan Cottam –  
[susan.cottam@sunderland.ac.uk](mailto:susan.cottam@sunderland.ac.uk)**

We extend our thanks to the Irish Embassy  
and to B.A.I.S for their support.

***Beckett Exhibition***

This year the Irish Embassy is offering us the Beckett Exhibition. It is understood that this will be a brand new exhibition, which will be on display in Dublin from June to September, 2006. The fact that it is coming to Sunderland and Durham so soon after this reflects the growing status of our conference.

We also intend to host further events in the course of 2006. If you have any suggestions for what these might be please e-mail us.

**HONORARY AWARD**

We are delighted to announce that our long-time friend and patron, Bernard O'Donoghue will be awarded an Honorary Doctor of Arts at the University of Sunderland on 14<sup>th</sup> July, 2006. As an institution and as a network, Sunderland and NEICN are honoured to be associated with Bernard and we wish him congratulations and our very best wishes.

#### *NEICN Publications.*

The first NEICN publication, *Representing Ireland: Past, Present and Future* (ed). F. Beardow and Alison O'Malley-Younger and was launched at the 2005 conference.

This collection of essays, based on the proceeds of the first two conferences tackles one of the most fascinating phenomena in Irish culture: the representation of the 'concept' of Ireland. The individual essays, which examine texts from the North and South of the country, together comprise a broad chronological, generic and theoretical scope that ranges from the sixteenth century to the present day. The volume is a wide-ranging and important contribution to current debates on identity and representation in an Irish context; it tackles relevant issues from the perspectives of New Historicism, comparative analysis, post-structuralism, post-colonialism and gender, and from a variety of generic viewpoints: poetry, prose, drama and journalism. Writers discussed here include Edmund Spenser, Oscar Wilde, Robert Lynd, Patrick Kavanagh, Brian Friel, Seamus Heaney, Neil Jordan, Paul Muldoon and Nuala Ní Dhomhnaill. Also included is some previously unpublished work by the poet Bernard O'Donoghue. Overall, this book is a new instalment in discussions of the vigour and originality of literary representations of Ireland in the past, in the present, and in the future.

The book is available at [amazon.co.uk](http://amazon.co.uk). Copies can also be ordered from the University of Sunderland Press by e-

mailing Carole Batey on  
[carole.batey@sunderland.ac.uk](mailto:carole.batey@sunderland.ac.uk)

#### REVIEWS

**Review of: IRISH WRITING: AN ANTHOLOGY OF IRISH LITERATURE IN ENGLISH 1789 – 1939, (ed.) Stephen Regan Oxford University Press – 2004 ISBN-0-19-284038-X**

In the wake of reviews of reviews of the *Field Day Anthology of Irish Literature* Francis Mulhern reflected in his 1993 essay, "A Nation, Yet Again" that "[a]nthologies are strategic weapons in literary politics" and that the selection of texts within anthologies of Irish Literature "play more or less telling parts in a theatre of shifting alliances and antagonisms". Eilean Ni Chuilleain's opposition to Seamus Deane's suggestion for "a comprehensive anthology" stressed the exclusivity and false inclusivity of all anthologies. In response to criticisms that the *Field Day Anthology of Irish Literature* was an exercise in misogynistic canon building within the parameters of a valorised and indivisible nation, Seamus Deane retorted by emphasising the necessarily incomplete nature of any anthology, and explaining that he and his fellow editors were attempting nonetheless 'to re-present a series of representations concerning the island of Ireland' over fifteen hundred years.

Quoting from W.B Yeats, 'The seas of literature are full of the wrecks of Irish Anthologies' Stephen Regan displays a similar awareness to that of Deane's. The introduction to this compendious text displays certain knowledge that the selection process involved in the production of an 'Irish' anthology will not please everyone and, further, that the choice of material could alienate, possibly even anger, some readers due to the political connotations of terms such as 'Ireland' and 'Irishness'. As he argues 'Anthologies are suspect because they are, by their very nature, part of a tradition-

making process and tradition is often invoked as a way of defining and declaring identity. Anthologies can, of course, also acknowledge diversity and plurality'. This one does: wholly deserving comments such as that offered by P.J Matthews (Irish Times) - 'a lucid and informative introduction...the extracts are cleverly chosen' - and Paul Muldoon's accolade that 'Stephen Regan's anthology vividly and valiantly presents a nation, and a national literature, coming into being.'

The self-awareness of the editorial comment in this volume does much to preempt and mitigate criticisms that the selection of texts could activate, canonise and circulate an imagined national culture. Acknowledging that many of the selected writings 'are overtly nationalistic' due to the 'historical circumstances of their composition' Regan foregrounds the fact that the anthology follows a chronological rather than ideological order, (the point being, of course that in this context the two cannot be separated) this text includes an unparalleled range of writing, including essays, political speeches, biographical information and memoirs, fiction, poems, plays, and stories, some in their entirety and many of which are difficult to obtain elsewhere; in order to tell its meticulous and lucid panoramic 'story' of Irish literature and culture surrounded by an editorial register that is academic, insightful, engaged, engaging and extremely readable.

In a review of Regan's Anthology in the Irish Democrat, Shayla Warmsley suggests, with remarkable perspicacity, that 'Perhaps because he has chosen the 150 years from the late-18th century to the Irish Free State, Regan's emphasis is often on fighting words. And of those, you can be sure, there are many'. This is hardly surprising as the period covered spans a revolutionary era from the struggle for political independence, to the waning of the Celtic Revival; necessarily including the powerful nationalist polemic of Wolfe Tone and Daniel O'Connell; Robert Emmet's impassioned 'Speech from the

Dock' and Yeats's lyrical invocations of nationhood. As Regan himself argues, 'It [the anthology] spans 150 years of modern European history, from the French Revolution, which impacted so powerfully on Irish nationalist aspirations, to the outbreak of the Second World War, in which the newly independent Irish Free State maintained its neutrality. In that traumatic century and a half, the struggle for political independence inspired patriotic speeches, songs, and stories, and these in turn gave fresh inspiration to new generations of nationalist writers and activists. The voices of Wolfe Tone and Robert Emmet are heard in the uproar of Easter 1916 and later'.

In a discursive academic field characterised by 'posts' and 'isms' Regan's editorial style in this fascinatingly diverse anthology is refreshingly candid and enviably well-informed, providing invaluable bibliographic and biographical information, meticulously researched footnotes and fair-minded guidance on cultural, historical, and political issues along with a very useful chronology of key events in Irish history.

Thematically it covers issues essential to the student of Irish Literature and culture, including nationalism, imperialism, revolution, politics, linguistic dispossession, supernaturalism and the Sublime.

Generically its scope is impressive, covering Burkean philosophy, popular songs and ballads, Irish Gothic from Edgeworth to Stoker, Wildean wit and the fin de siecle, Yeatsian lyricism and Joycean linguistic experimentation. Lest I forget, in response to Shaylagh Warmsley's criticism that 'Beckett – Samuel, of Godot fame – gets a single, meagre extract', it also includes Beckettian anti-realism in 'From *Murphy*': (note to Shaylagh Warmsley, re; meagre extracts, 'Beckett – Samuel, of Godot fame' is also Beckett – Samuel, of 'Breath' fame, a play remarkably meagre in dialogue!).

Regan's purpose is 'to encourage readers to discover for themselves the

strange and unexpected ways in which works of literature engage with their times'. It is easy to endorse this claim. The scope, the detail and the precision of this anthology should ensure that readers do exactly that! It is a stimulating and valuable contribution to the field of Irish Studies scholarship that provides thought-provoking reading, concise critical evaluation, exacting scholarly research and valuable bibliographic information. This book should be welcomed and will certainly be cited in subsequent works in and on Irish Studies. If it is not, it should be; its strengths lying not least in the close attention to and careful selection of exemplary Irish texts that capture the specific zeitgeist of successive epochs, providing the reader with novel insights and opening up channels for further debate.

The seas of literature may well be full of the wrecks of Irish Anthologies. This one is watertight from bow to stern: a watertight investment for the student of Irish literature and culture.

**Dr Alison O'Malley-Younger**

***Reviewers required.***

We are also interested in having people review *Representing Ireland: Past, Present and Future*, or any other text, either in this newsletter or in another forum, please contact us at the e-mail addresses at the bottom of this newsletter.

***Forthcoming Publications***

We are also producing a further collection of essays with Cambridge Scholars' Press. Edited by Richard Allen, Stephen Regan and Alison O'Malley-Younger this text, which includes essays in Literary, Cultural and Historical Studies will be entitled: ***'Ireland: Lands of Saints and Scholars'*** and will be available in 2006

The third NEICN publication is currently being organised. If you are interested in

submitting a paper for publication please send a proposal to Alison O'Malley-Younger and Stephen Regan copying the NEICN administrator, Susan Cottam into the e-mail: [susan.cottam@sunderland.ac.uk](mailto:susan.cottam@sunderland.ac.uk)

**NEWSWORTHY ITEMS**

**CALL FOR PAPERS**

**Call for Papers: Modern Irish Gothic**

The collection will be an interdisciplinary project and contributions are sought from scholars of literary fiction, poetry, theatre, film, art history, performance arts, historical geography, sociology, comparative literature, postcolonial theory feminist theory and psychoanalysis, among others. The focus of the collection will be both on manifestations of generic gothic forms in the cultural artefacts of Ireland from 1900 to the present day, but there will also be a focus on the thematics of anxiety, subversion, sublimated desire, violence, paranoia, subjectivity, sexuality, inheritance, cultural ruination, the politics of reproduction.

Proposals in abstract form (500 words) are invited, to be submitted to Dr Eoin Flannery at [coin.flannery@ul.ie](mailto:coin.flannery@ul.ie) Deadline for proposals is December 31st 2006.

**Call for Papers**

**Women's History Association Ireland  
Annual Meeting  
Friday Evening, November 17<sup>th</sup>  
and  
Saturday, 18<sup>th</sup> November 2006  
Trinity College, Dublin**

**Hosted by  
The Centre for Gender and Women's  
Studies**

Theme: Doing Gender History: Methods  
and Models

This conference will explore the shape and content of gender history – moving beyond men’s history (traditional) history and women’s history to develop a new holistic paradigm that includes and values the actions/experiences and ideas of both men and women. We ask: How do we do gender history? What would it look like? Do we have specific examples of doing gender history?

Theoretical, methodological, chronological/events based papers as well as papers on individuals or themes within gender history are most welcome.

**Deadline for submission: August 25<sup>th</sup> 2006**

**Send 1 page abstracts to Dr. Maryann Valiulis, Women’s History Association Conference, Centre for Gender and Women’s History, Trinity College, Dublin or Electronically to [cgws.conferences@tcd.ie](mailto:cgws.conferences@tcd.ie)**

If any of our members have any publications you would like us to mention, either in the Newsletter, or on the website, please let us know and we will endeavour to include them.

Our website is currently under construction. At present a preliminary website can be accessed on <http://www.aisc.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk/>