

folk life

NEWSLETTER

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*The Robert Burns Birthplace Museum,
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THE SOCIETY FOR FOLK LIFE STUDIES

ANNUAL CONFERENCE 2017

This year's conference will be held in Alloway, Ayrshire and runs from the evening of 14 September until lunch-time on 17 September.

Our venue in this beautiful area of south west Scotland is the Robert Burns Birthplace Museum which is run by the National Trust for Scotland.

The conference programme is being developed and currently there are still opportunities to propose papers. The themes are:

Identity and place in literature

Cross-cultural connections in material culture

If you would like to contribute a paper, please contact the Conference Secretary, Steph Mastoris (steph.mastoris@museumwales.ac.uk).

Please see the Society's website for the full programme where you can also find a booking form, copies of which are enclosed with this newsletter.

A free student place at the 2017 conference

Once again the Society is offering a free place at its annual conference to a student in full-time education. All fees and the cost of bookable meals will be included, but the person attending will have to pay for his or her own travel. To be considered for this opportunity, a person must not have attended the annual conference before. A

short review of the conference will be required from the successful applicant.

Applications for this **free place** should be made to the Conference Secretary, Steph Mastoris (steph.mastoris@museumwales.ac.uk), by the end of May.

The Society's
CONFERENCE 2018
will be held in Wales



The dates are not fixed as yet but the venue is St Fagans, Cardiff to see the results of the major redevelopment there.

Details will be posted on the Society's website in due course.

Study Day
9 May 2017 at Dunmurry

On 9 May 2017, there will be the opportunity to visit First Dunmurry (Non-Subscribing) Presbyterian Church. Dunmurry retains a strong village identity and is situated on the outskirts of Belfast. The church we are planning to visit is the third structure to have been built on the site and was constructed in 1779. It is best described as a vernacular gem.

In the Non-Subscribing tradition, Communion usually takes place only twice a year, at the beginning of both May and November. The Dunmurry church retains an ancient form of Communion observance, and it will be possible to see how this takes place as the Communion Tables will be kept in place for the Study Day.

In addition to being a building of very great interest, Dunmurry meeting-house contains some fascinating monuments, including one to a member of the Andrews family. Naval architect Thomas Andrews famously died on the Titanic, and the family were Ulster Unitarians. The church also features a magnificent window attributed to Tiffany, and the graveyard surrounding the church contains significant features.

The Minister Emeritus at Dunmurry, the Very Rev. W McMillan, is a noted botanist, horticulturalist and internationally renowned floral artist after whom Hosta Rev Mac is named. Over several decades, he has developed a magnificent garden at Dunmurry, where many rare species may be seen. As part of the Study Day, he will lead a garden walk, a rare opportunity to visit this secluded beauty spot. A polymath, the Very Rev. Mr. McMillan is also well known as a historian. Both he and the Minister of Dunmurry, Rev. Linda Ballard, will provide talks on the history of the meeting house.

Dunmurry is easily accessible by public transport, and the railway halt is a short uphill walk from the church. From Belfast City Airport, take the train from Sydenham for either Lisburn or Portadown (there are only two platforms) for a journey of nine stops. From the International airport, there is a coach to Great Victoria Street. From there, the journey is four stops along the same line.

The cost of the Study Day will be £15 per head, to include a light lunch. Replies please to firstdunmurrynsp@gmail.com

CONFERENCE 2016

The conference was opened by the President Linda Ballard where she welcomed everyone to the Dublin.

Conference Papers

Rev. Professor Laurence Kirkpatrick

1916 and the Memory of Ireland



Dr Laurence Kirkpatrick is Professor of Church History at Union College, Queen's University, Belfast, and has also served as a Presbyterian minister for several years. His paper was a superb introduction to our two conference themes, 'Memorialisation' and 'Identity', set in the context of the centenary commemorations of 1916 and the significance of that year in Irish history and memory. He emphasised the fundamental importance of learning from our past, reminding us of both Santayana's remark, 'Those who cannot learn from history are doomed to repeat it' and of George Bernard Shaw's deeply ironic comment, 'We learn from history that we learn nothing from history'. He referred to the current marking in Ireland of a 'decade of centenaries', and to the complex, even confusing nature of Irish history, in which the process of commemoration may potentially be a cause of both conflict and contentment, while offering opportunities for engagement, reflection and the development of a new outlook for the future.

He then introduced two major events occurring in 1916, the Easter Rising and the Battle of the Somme, asking challenging questions about the way in which such commemorations, with their deep resonances of community identity, may best be handled. He looked in considerable detail at the history of these events, assessing the background and consequences of the Easter Rising and the roles of both 36th Ulster and 16th Irish Divisions at the Somme. This was a moving and sombre reflection, which

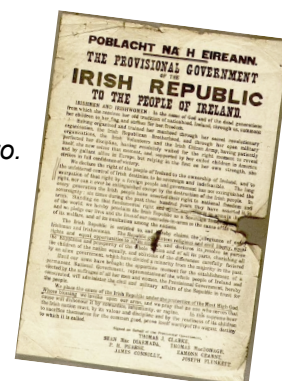
perhaps may here be reflected in the vignette of two year old Sean Foster, the first child to die in the aftermath of the Easter Rising. His father died as a soldier prior to the Somme, during WWI fighting in Belgium the previous year. Sean's widowed mother was wheeling the child in a pram in Church Street, Dublin, where her brother was one of the volunteers manning a barricade erected there. Mounted soldiers from the Lancers fired shots at the barricade and Sean was hit below his left ear, causing fatal wounding. His mother, who survived him for almost fifty years, thereafter always carried two locket. One contained a photograph of her husband, the other a photograph of her son. She held the British responsible for the death of her husband and the rebels for the loss of her child.

Professor Kirkpatrick then considered the history of the memorialisation of these major events, and of the complexities involved. Doing so, he referred to the Glasnevin Memorial Wall, recently unveiled in that great cemetery. This records the names of everyone who died in the Easter Rising, irrespective of the nature of the involvement of the individual. He quoted the Chairman of the Glasnevin Trust, who commented, 'One hundred years on, we believe this memorial reflects the times we live in, with the overwhelming majority of Irish people wishing to live in peace and reconciliation'. Memorialisation may, however, be a challenge to the sense of identity of both groups and individuals, and Prof. Kirkpatrick pointed out that during the unveiling, protests occurred outside the cemetery.

This was a remarkable paper, spellbindingly covering an enormous amount of ground in a very short time. It dealt with deeply challenging issues in a way characterised above all by thorough insight and great sensitivity, and we look forward to seeing it in publication in *Folklife* in due course. As listeners prepared to ask their own questions after the paper, Professor Kirkpatrick's closing query rang in our ears, 'Can we learn from history?' Here lies the central challenge in terms of questions of memorialisation and identity.

*Proclamation of the
Irish Republic read at the
GPO in Dublin, Easter 1916 Pto.*

Linda-May Ballard



POBLACHT NA H EIREANN.
THE PROVISIONAL GOVERNMENT
OF THE
IRISH REPUBLIC
TO THE PEOPLE OF IRELAND.

IRISHMEN AND IRISHWOMEN : In the name of God and of the dead generations from which she receives her old tradition of nationhood, Ireland, through us, summons her children to her flag and strikes for her freedom.

Having organised and trained her manhood through her secret revolutionary organisation, the Irish Republican Brotherhood, and through her open military organisations, the Irish Volunteers and the Irish Citizen Army, having patiently perfected her discipline, having resolutely waited for the right moment to reveal itself, she now seizes that moment, and, supported by her exiled children in America and by gallant allies in Europe, but relying in the first on her own strength, she strikes in full confidence of victory.

We declare the right of the people of Ireland to the ownership of Ireland, and to the unfettered control of Irish destinies, to be sovereign and indefeasible. The long usurpation of that right by a foreign people and government has not extinguished the right, nor can it ever be extinguished except by the destruction of the Irish people. In every generation the Irish people have asserted their right to national freedom and sovereignty; six times during the past three hundred years they have asserted it in arms. Standing on that fundamental right and again asserting it in arms in the face of the world, we hereby proclaim the Irish Republic as a Sovereign Independent State, and we pledge our lives and the lives of our comrades-in-arms to the cause of its freedom, of its welfare, and of its exaltation among the nations.

The Irish Republic is entitled to, and hereby claims, the allegiance of every Irishman and Irishwoman. The Republic guarantees religious and civil liberty, equal rights and equal opportunities to all its citizens, and declares its resolve to pursue the happiness and prosperity of the whole nation and of all its parts, cherishing all the children of the nation equally, and oblivious of the differences carefully fostered by an alien government, which have divided a minority from the majority in the past.

Until our arms have brought the opportune moment for the establishment of a permanent National Government, representative of the whole people of Ireland and elected by the suffrages of all her men and women, the Provisional Government, hereby constituted, will administer the civil and military affairs of the Republic in trust for the people.

We place the cause of the Irish Republic under the protection of the Most High God, Whose blessing we invoke upon our arms, and we pray that no one who serves that cause will dishonour it by cowardice, inhumanity, or rapine. In this supreme hour the Irish nation must, by its valour and discipline and by the readiness of its children to sacrifice themselves for the common good, prove itself worthy of the august destiny to which it is called.

Signed on Behalf of the Provisional Government,

THOMAS J. CLARKE,

SEAN Mac DIARMADA,

THOMAS MacDONAGH,

P. H. PEARSE,

EAMONN CEANNT,

JAMES CONNOLLY.

JOSEPH PLUNKETT.

Bairbre Ní Fhloinn

In touch with the tangible: - Intangible Cultural Heritage and the National Folklore Collection

In this illuminating and thought-provoking talk, Dr Ní Fhloinn, subject lead for Irish Folklore at University College Dublin, set the scene for our day based at the UCD campus, which is home to the National Folklore Collection.

Intangible Cultural Heritage is a term now widely used by international organisations such as UNESCO and ICOMOS. But, as Dr Ní Fhloinn emphasised, we need to ensure that *both* intrinsic aspects of our cultural heritage, intangible *and* tangible, are given equal weight and support.

The ‘discovery’ of ICH dates back to the 1970s but the term took off after the 2003 UNESCO safeguarding convention which marked a shift away from post-war material concerns. It covers everything from oral traditions to knowledge related to nature, ritual and craftsmanship. But the intangible needs the tangible for context and meaning, as ethnologists have always known, but other heritage-related disciplines are just discovering.

This indivisibility lies at the heart of the NFC, which UCD took over from the state-run Irish Folklore Commission in 1971. The collection has striven to document both aspects of cultural heritage, stretching back to 1928 and *Béaloides*, the journal of the Folklore of Ireland Society, as well as taking in the 1942 Handbook of Irish Folklore, whose categories are still the cornerstone of UCD teaching and NFC collecting.

The need to mine the double vein of the material and the immaterial, particularly where conservation is concerned, was demonstrated by two examples. The Mayglass Farmstead in Co. Wexford became an important heritage site in the 1990s as the first to be explicitly saved for its vernacular importance, a new policy departure for the Irish Heritage Council who used it to ‘learn’ old techniques and practices for the future. The multi-stratified nature of cultural heritage was revealed by the many fixtures and fittings left in the house, which only took their meaning from the people who had lived there. Physical conservation proved the easy part – but how can you preserve the invisible which brings the place to life? Lighting a fire in Mayglass’s hearth would be a conservation nightmare. But the hearth is the social – intangible – heart of the traditional Irish rural home. So the fire was lit...

A second example from the North Sligo/North Leitrim border revealed another challenge: how can one give equal weight to the intangible when documenting the built environment? In this case, the ‘something special’ about the passageway in a ruined house which, local memory has it, was always kept clear to allow the fairies to pass through. How can this be captured without removing all the subtlety of personal or local belief?

Ireland finally ratified the UNESCO convention on ICH in December 2015. (The UK has yet to do so). The NFC, in being considered for the UN Memory of the World register, shows that it encapsulates both the tangible and intangible. The conclusion of the speaker, and the consensus of the audience, is that this is a very healthy state of affairs. Future generations of ethnology fieldworkers will have an increasingly important role to play in revealing our cultural heritage in its material and immaterial whole.

Sarah Blowen

Criostóir Mac Cárthaigh

The material context of folk legend narration in a West Kerry fishing community in the early twentieth century

Criostóir Mac Cárthaigh’s paper gave a fascinating insight into the 19th/20th century Dingle fishing industry. Criostóir delineated the demographics of the Dingle peninsula during the period, explaining that the sea was a major resource for the people, and that, as the population grew, exploiting the potential of the marine environment assumed ever greater importance. From about 1860 onwards the introduction of the *naomhóg*, as the canoe or currach is known in the area, facilitated a dramatic escalation in the harvesting of fish and other marine products. Until this time, from about the 17th century seine fishing had been dominant but the *naomhóg* opened up new opportunities. This craft, consisting of tarred canvas on Egyptian cotton over a wicker frame, has been described as the finest example of skin boat building in Ireland. The smooth hulled oars create a fulcrum placing an emphasis on rhythm. With a high bow and a narrow stern suitable for heavy seas, a lug sail and oars used as rudders, the maneuvering these vessels required nerve and decisiveness. In the 1870s

spring mackerel provided heavy catches, and by the 1880s the autumn mackerel began to be exploited. A steady market for lobster and crayfish also developed from the 1860s. Seasonal income could provide £30 for the mackerel catch and £20 for lobster annually, which provided a good living. Some 60 canoes were once stowed at Cuas a' Bhodaigh (Brandon Creek) although this number has since declined. A similar scenario characterized Dún Chaoin (Dunquin) further south. Supported by the Congested Districts Board the fishery became an industry and sustained the economic upsurge that brought a measure of prosperity to the region. Nevertheless, it was a dangerous occupation and many stories of the time document near misses and escapes. Criostóir might have continued to explore this rich vein of narrative, but alas the exigencies of the clock brought this fascinating presentation to an all too early end. We look forward to seeing the printed version in a future edition of *Folk Life*.

Lillis Ó Laoire

Barbara Hillers

Folktales and Reality: The Reflection of Material Culture in the Folktale of Master's Good Counsels

This is the first time Dr Barbara Hillers, from the Delargy Centre for Irish Folklore, of University College, Dublin, has addressed the S.F.L.S. Conference. Her broadly illustrated talk interwove images from art and of Irish vernacular objects (beds, mealchests etc.), with close analysis of a specific traditional folktale. Her enthusiastic introduction explained that although her own work centred mainly on 'oral literature', she stressed that the 'interweaving of the tangible and intangible is fundamental to material culture'. Focusing on a widely known and oft repeated folktale, 'The Master's Good Counsels' or 'The 3 Good Advices [sic]' she said the story was 'widely attested and well known all over Europe', as well as in other parts of the world such as Eurasia and French Canada. One of the oldest known European versions (c.1200) is in Middle Irish in the Gaelic tradition, and 18 versions were known from Scotland. 270 of the 290 Irish versions come from the National Folklore Collection. Of these, most predominated from the western seaboard counties. Barbara showed photos of some of the Irish Folklore Commission collectors in the first half of the twentieth century, and the

heavy equipment (weighing nearly 4 stone) often carried by bicycle, used for their recording processes.

The tale has variations, but usually tells of a labourer who goes off to work for a master, and is then given a choice of wages, or 'three pieces of advice' before returning home again to his poor family. The first advice is 'take the straight road, never a short cut'. The second is 'never stay in the house of an old man and a young woman' and the third is 'don't do today what you'll regret tomorrow'. He sets off and is given a loaf to carry, for his wife for when he gets home. He is tempted by a short cut, but decides against it and his travelling companions are attacked on the wilder route. Finding a house with an old man and a young woman, he refuses their offer of accommodation, opting to sleep in a haystack instead. There is a convoluted murder plot in the old man's house and having slept outside, the labourer manages to depart from the scene, and not be drawn in. On arriving home, he sees his wife in bed with another man, and enraged, he nearly commits murder. However (according to the 3rd advice of not doing today what he'd regret tomorrow), he fortunately hesitates, and discovers the man to be his own son. Despite running low on food, the 'competent' wife has evidently raised their child to (virtually unrecognisable) manhood. They cut the bread, which was wisely kept for her, and the husband's wages (wisely rejected in lieu of good advice) are found inside it. They live happily ever after.

It is explained that the tale is about poverty, and our labourer is an Irish 'spalpeen' (from Irish *spailpín* a landless seasonal labourer), who along with the cottier class was low in the rural hierarchy. Such people lived in overcrowded poor conditions, which affected the way their accommodation and few possessions were arranged. Their one roomed cabins lacked separate bedrooms, indeed families normally slept huddled close together to stay warm 'in stradogue' in front of the fire, or communally in a fireside outshot bed or perhaps a covered bed or settle bed. So the idea of the labourer glimpsing his wife sleeping close to a man, either as he glanced in through the window, or entered the door, is realistic. The better off tenant farmers or higher up the scale the 'Middlemen', or at the top of the hierarchy the landlords, usually had separate bedrooms (not visible at a glance from the door or window), or beds with doors or curtains, so such a story was less applicable to them. Likewise, the idea of carrying and saving bread, however hungry - for people higher up the social scale, was less crucial. It would have struck a chord in households where people

struggled to keep sufficient meal between one harvest and the next, in specially made fireside meal-chests, which Barbara showed us images of. Likewise in rural Ireland, farmers with land frequently arranged the marriages of their offspring (in lieu of inheritance). So the idea of trouble relating to households of old men married to younger women, was in itself a familiar Irish cautionary tale. So the interweaving of the tale with the objects brought Hiller's narrative back to material culture, which made it seem more plausible within the moral context. She said it was essential for the original storytellers to have every detail of such moral folktales 'rooted in the storyteller's living reality'. Such moral tales of good or bad marriages equated with good or bad endings, so the folktale was a blueprint for good marriage. In terms of folk life Hillers concluded how it informs that storyteller had their own anxieties and aspirations. It was perhaps surprising to hear that only about 20% of the storytellers were female. As with other stories from folklore, the interplay between the disciplines (and between other research methodologies too such as art history and object analysis) is mutually informative and can be far greater than the sum of its parts.

Claudia Kinmonth

Prof. Patricia Lysaght

'Livestock kept in the dwelling house:

Nineteenth and early twentieth evidence for the practice in Ireland.'

Being Irish with a maternal family that farmed over several generations mainly in County Antrim, including to get a better understanding of what my predecessors may have either done or observed, I was keen to listen to Patricia Lysaght's paper that explored the circumstances whereby people and livestock shared, informally or formally, the same living space.

Prof. Lysaght, Department of Irish Folklore, University College Dublin (UCD), began by introducing some of the principal evidence sources for her paper: The Folklore Society of Ireland (*An Cumann le Béaloideas Éireann, est. 1927*); Irish Folklore Institute (*1930-1935*); which then became the Irish Folklore Commission (*Coimisiún Béaloideas Éireann, est. 1935*) until 1971 when the Dept. of Irish Folklore was established at UCD. Further sources included places such as the Ulster Folk and

Transport Museum and Muckcross Traditional Farms, Killarney. Again, nineteenth century published sources, for example William Shaw Mason's 'Statistical Account or Parochial Survey of Ireland' (*Dublin, 1814*) and the 'Ordnance Survey Memoirs of Ireland' (*1830 ~ 1839*).

Next, Prof. Lysaght talked about the importance of "hearing" stories: how we need to know, listen and rely on people to relate stories that inform about buildings, their history and use. From there, success, as evidenced by places such as Muckcross, depends on how we employ or transmit those stories as an aid to interpretation. The idea of stories was linked to the evidence reflected in the reports of the Irish 'Congested Districts Board', established in 1891 to help alleviate poverty and aid economic development in the overcrowded or 'congested' areas. Evidence from the latter included the overnight or temporary keeping of livestock in a dwelling in addition to the inhabitant's family.

It was stories and evidence that encouraged the studies, including supported by the Irish Folklore Commission (IFC), of traditional dwellings in Ireland, notably that in 1935 by Áke Campbell (1891~1857) from Uppsala, Sweden. In 1937 an exhibition of Campbell's work was held at the National Museum hosted by the controversial Nazi supporting Director, Dr Adolf Mahr. However it was the appointment of Caomhín Ó Danachair (Kevin Danaher) by the IFC as the ethnological expert on vernacular structures and associated traditions that was significant for future studies e.g. 'The combined byre-and-dwelling in Ireland' ('Folk Life', 1964). Latterly other major studies included those by Desmond McCourt (e.g. 'The house with bedroom over byre: a long-house derivative' in 'Ulster Folklife', 1970) and Alan Gailey (e.g. 'Rural Houses of the North of Ireland', 1984)

Continuing, Prof. Lysaght introduced personal accounts as viable sources, in particular the informative 'The Felon's Track' by barrister Michael Doheny (1805~1862) from Brookhill, Co. Tipperary. In 1848, Doheny, a leader in the failed 'Young Ireland' uprising became a fugitive undertaking a 150 mile travel westward, seeking lodgings where he could. His contemporary account included as he neared his journey's end: "*On this 'settle' my host prepared my bed of new-mown hay, barricaded with old chairs and a table against the assault of the hungry animals... the door consisted of a pair of tongs as to prevent the egress of the cattle*" and numerous other documented insights into living standards and conditions. One question is whether his observations reflected poverty or different values.

The paper concluded with further building examples, including storyteller Seán Ó Conaill's (1853-1931) house at Cill Rialaigh, Kerry, where the partition between the living area and the byre included the fireplace. Ó Conaill had been documented by Séamus Ó Duilearga (James Delargy) of the Irish Folk Commission in the 1920s and in 1934, at the latter's bequest, Ó Conaill was further documented by Áke Campbell. Other examples related further to the work of Áke Campbell e.g. in Antrim, the work of Estyn Evans e.g. 'Donegal Survivals' ('Antiquity', Vol. 13, June 1939) and the observations of 1800s philanthropist James H. Tuke who in his 'Visit to Connaught in the autumn of 1848' letter to the Relief Committee of the Society of Friends Dublin included "*Of what is this human dwelling place composed?... Window there is none, chimneys are not known; an aperture in front... light, smoke, pigs and children all pass in and out of this aperture.*"

Patricia Lysaght's paper I found not only informative, as I had hoped, but also inspiring to make me seek out her references which, as promised, skilfully drew upon the variety of resources that influenced the founders of such as the Irish Folk Commission and successive researchers. Finally, having been closely involved with the vernacular buildings at the Highland Folk Museum, Newtonmore, Scotland I was struck by some of physical similarities presented, for example, a cattle byre divided off from the living area by a byre drain. This should not be surprising, especially with numerous cultural links between Ireland and Scotland. However, it does highlight for me the ongoing scope there is in comparing cultural similarities, in all their guises, between not only near but more distant nations too.

Bob Powell ('Riobaird De Phoil'... my official Irish name.)

Kelly Fitzgerald

Materials of a marriage: contemporary ceremonies in Cabra

Kelly is from Chicago, so has a helpful "outside" eye for observations, and emphasised that archives must engage with current material, if they want to perpetuate their relevance and take advantage of the opportunities offered by inquiries, such as the micro-study of wedding customs

she has been carrying out in a housing development in Dublin. Although commitment to Catholic Church ritual has declined in the post-Vatican II era, people today actually listen to and engage with liturgy far more. Kelly had the benefit of an auto-ethnographic experience of her own wedding as a Protestant in a Catholic Church and spoke seriously with her priest informant about what is really important: his answer was "only two things", to freely consent and to raise the children as Catholics, so that all the rest is cultural, such as customs of kissing the bride or exchanging rings. She also commented that the "folk" who do theology do not necessarily have much contact with the people who do folklore.

Priests propose that innovations come mainly from the United States, such as Kelly's first example of the candle-lighting custom that can be done in a registry office wedding, as well as in church, where some couples even bring their own candle set, which Debbie, her informant and expert "event organizer" sees as symbolic of their life together. The second "new" tradition is for the couple to pour two different colours of sand into a glass vase to keep, "until the kiddies get bigger and mess it up".

Since couples often have children before marriage, Debbie is already a trusted mothering advisor by the time she is consulted about a wedding and her first question is: do you want a religious wedding or a romantic one? As observed in Linda Ballard's *Forgetting Frolic, Marriage Traditions in Ireland*, there is great emphasis on photographs as memory-makers and keepers, so Debbie, reminds people to "be sure and look at the crowd". She personally likes purple and suggests putting freesia in the bridal bouquet because the scent, as well as the colour, will help create a stronger memory.

Debbie stands in a lineage of tradition-bearers, as her great-grandmother was a professional fortune-teller, who passed on her skills to her own daughter, and the demand for their knowledge was also in an urban setting. Debbie is affectionately recognized in the Cabra community as an expert, and even "crowned queen". Her services appear to be part of a survival kit for newlyweds and Kelly asked what you might call her function in this rite of passage...

What about a wedding midwife, or wedding maieutician, according to Socrates, if you prefer a more technical term?

Cozette Griffin-Kremer

Anne O’Dowd

Straw, Hay and rushes in Irish Folk Tradition

Anne O’Dowd’s paper on straw gave a brief but fascinating glimpse into the breadth and scope of her recently published magnum opus on straw and its use in Ireland from earliest times down to the present. As can be surmised from the scope of the paper, it was impossible for the speaker to give a detailed account of all the material. Nevertheless the examples she chose, served to whet the appetite for the monograph, handsomely produced and lavishly illustrated by Irish Academic Press in association with the National Museum of Ireland in 2015. Dr. O’Dowd has recently retired from her position as curator in the National Museum and has spent 20 years writing this volume. Her talk ranged from items of vocabulary in Irish to the occurrence of straw in the early saga literature. The talk briefly discussed a range of objects made from the straw of various kinds of grain – wheat, rye and oats. Objects made from rushes were also considered. The range of objects was truly comprehensive and the speaker described how the making and use of straw was gendered in that men mainly made the objects while it was women mainly who used them. That ubiquitous symbol of Irish folk culture, the St. Bridget’s Cross was one of the most widespread items created using straw and the custom of wearing straw for ritual purposes was also mentioned. Bonnets found in sixteenth century Livorno had made their way via 17th century Luton, to be documented in Ireland by the nineteenth century. Anne also briefly surveyed the well-known phenomenon of the last sheaf and informed the rapt audience how in the old Irish tale ‘Esnada Tige Buchet’ (The Singing of Buchet’s House), a female cowherd ties up a male with a straw spangle, an act which causes his death. After this brief but tantalising tour through some highlights of her book, Anne smiled and told us if we wanted to learn more we would just have to buy the book. All in all, it was a very effective promotion of the volume, as well as a brief but fascinating survey of the many ingenious uses of this humble but indispensable material from early times to the present.

Lillis O Laoire

Anna Bale

The Dúchas Project and the digitisation of the National Folklore Collection organisation

Archivist Anna Bale provided an engaging overview of the Dúchas Project at University College Dublin. The project builds on a long history of digitisation of the National Folklore Collection, from 1990s digitisation for preservation to the limited availability of records online in the early 2000s. The Dúchas Project aims to make the whole collection searchable and accessible online, starting with the Schools Collection.

The National Folklore Collection is diverse, containing around two million manuscript pages, 500,000 index cards, 12,000 hours of audio recordings, 80,000 photographs, 1,000 hours of film, as well as publications and artworks. The Schools Collection consists of manuscripts from the 1937–38 Schools Scheme, a joint initiative between the Department of Education and the Irish Folklore Commission which encouraged schoolchildren to collect folklore from elderly relatives and neighbours.

Anna’s paper offered practical insight into the challenges of digitising such a collection as well as the opportunities it generated. Digitised records were made searchable to online visitors in numerous ways: volunteer transcription enabled free-text searches while geotagged addresses allowed records to be ‘pinned’ to relevant locations on a searchable map. Records can be searched in both English and Irish. Some manuscripts contain sensitive data as well as references to contentious historical events, but project staff decided to deal with issues on a takedown rather than censorship basis.

The process of digitisation offered added value in numerous ways, from folktale mapping and the use of a new folklore thesaurus to crowdsourcing and volunteer community transcription projects. Through entering the names of the schoolchildren and adults who contributed to the Schools Scheme, the project was also able to help put together an Irish surnames index.

The next stages of the project include the digitisation of the main manuscript collection along with a selection of photographs and audio and video recordings. These records present different challenges to the Schools Collection; written by adults, manuscripts in the main collection are written in a greater variety of Irish dialects and therefore present a greater challenge for volunteer tran-

scribers. The digitisation and online accessibility of these archives form an invaluable resource for researchers of Irish folklore, and the ongoing development of the project is of great interest to folklorists and collections professionals alike.

Felicity McWilliams

Matthew Richardson

1916 in the Isle of Man

The late 19th century saw a revival in interest in Manx culture, history and language. This was espoused by the Manx establishment, including members of the island's Parliament, Tynwald, as well as the lieutenant-governor of the day. The decision by Lord Raglan, lieutenant-governor in 1906, to block social legislation paralleling that introduced by the 1906 Liberal Government in Westminster, left the Manx people in an inferior position – and this rankled. But, the island's nationalists stressed that the first loyalty of the Manx people should be to the British Empire. The Manx-speaking cultural sector also threw its weight behind the war effort from August 1914 on.

However, by 1915, war was having a very significant effect on Manx society and economy. By 1913, 90% of the island's population relied on tourism for their livelihoods, and 633,000 visitors had come to the island that year. War brought all of this almost to an end; most ferries had been requisitioned by the Navy, and prospective visitors feared U-boat activity. Pressure was brought to bear on the island's government for assistance to be given to boarding house keepers and others affected. Lord Raglan refused all requests. In addition, the establishment of Knockaloe internment camp near Peel (which, with 25,000 POWs became the largest in the world) drove up food prices, affecting those on low incomes.

By 1916, the island was in a state of crisis. Many felt that the solution was wealth redistribution via some form of direct taxation, but Raglan refused this – and raised duties on tobacco and sugar, hitting the poor harder than the rich. Several members of Tynwald were at loggerheads with Raglan. Christopher Shimmin of Peel, a stonemason, and radical socialist playwright, noted

“...[Raglan] has infinitely more power in the Isle of Man than King George has in England...the workers, the labouring men and women, are penalised for being Manx... In Manxland there is no state insurance, no work-mens' compensation... The Manx working men are... asking for annexation, so as to share in the juster British laws...” The implication was clear: nationalism of old was too “antiquarian” in nature, and – if nationalism was to mean anything – then it had to develop political ambitions.

Tynwald Day in mid 1916 saw public resentment against Raglan boil over. As his procession made its way to Tynwald Hill, cheers were drowned out by groans and boos; huge protesting placards were displayed; and Raglan was “sodded” by someone in the crowd. As demands for annexation continued, it appeared that many of the working class were in favour of abandoning independence, and joining with England.

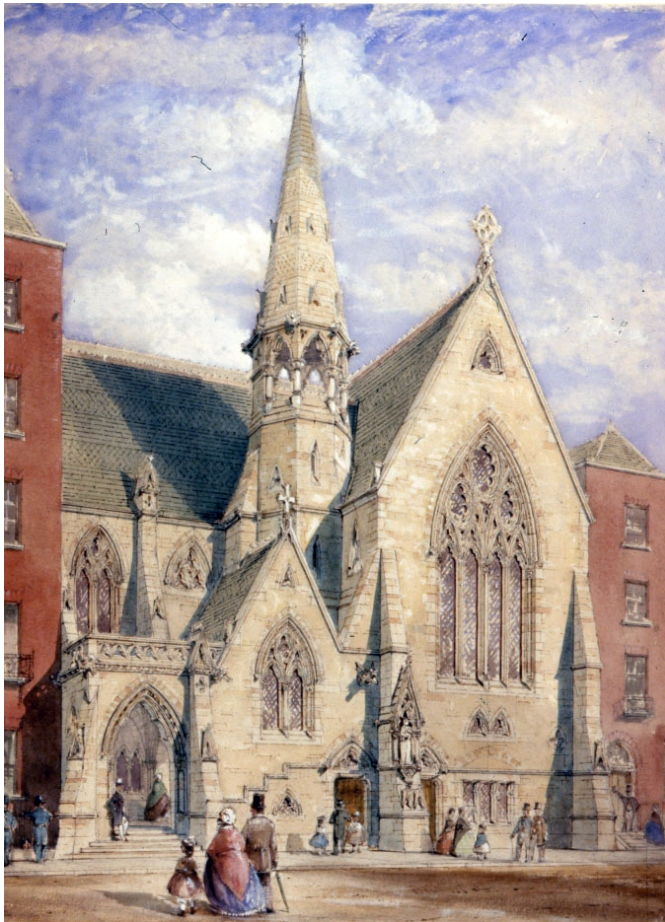
That was not wholly true, given that the debate also split the Manx along nationalist lines. The poetry of Mona Douglas – who had, in 1916, published *The Manx Call to Arms* – was a statement of nationalist aspiration. By 1917, her inspiration was clearly nationalist Ireland, and its success in freeing itself of the British Empire. The influence of this close confidant of Eamon De Valera over the generations of Manx nationalist that grew up in the aftermath of the First World War was immense. Her spirit lives on in manifestos and beliefs of *Mec Vannin*, the Manx Nationalist Party that still exists today.

It's clear, then, that it was the crisis of 1916 which provided the crucial turning point in the development of Manx nationalist thinking. Mona Douglas, and her successors, saw republican Ireland as a role model to which they could turn for inspiration.

Dafydd Roberts

Dr Isabella Evangelisti

The Unitarian Congregation in Dublin, 1863-1916: from the margins to the mainstream.

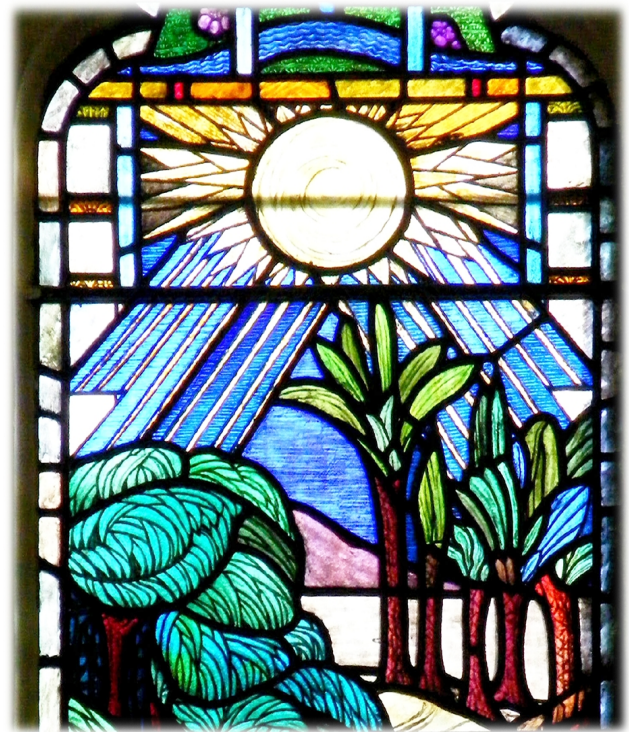


Dr Evangelisti is an art historian based in both Belfast and Dublin, and her excellent paper addressed the history of the Dublin Unitarian congregation during the period between the opening of the new church on St Stephen's Green in 1863 and the Easter Rising in Dublin. This fascinating analysis was contextualised by the commissioning, building and decoration of the church itself, and it opened with an illustration of a detail of a stained glass window featuring a brightly shining sun. Dr Evangelisti adroitly used this as a symbol of the way in which the building of the church demonstrated how the congregation had found its own 'place in the sun'.

She began by outlining the complex background of the Unitarian congregations in Dublin, which in 1863 were united in the congregation of Stephen's Green. She showed an illustration of the building once used as a Meeting House by the older congregation of Eustace Street, which nowadays provides no hint of its previous identity and its importance to this minority religious community. The construction of the new church building on the increasingly fashionable west side of St Stephen's

Green allowed the Unitarian congregations to emerge from the shadows and establish themselves much more prominently in central Dublin.

This prominence was reflected by the exuberant architecture of the church building, commissioned from the firm of Lanyon, which had recently opened offices on Dublin's Sackville Street. The architect was Lynn, who specialised in creating buildings in the newly emerging 'Gothic' style. This form was the choice of the church committee, who clearly wanted to make a visible statement of their presence and their identity. However, as Dr Evangelisti illustrated, not all the flourishes of Lynn's original design were incorporated in its realisation, reflecting a range of considerations including cost. She demonstrated the ingenious use made by the architect of the site, relating the physical expression of the building to the theological stance of Unitarianism. The social concerns of the congregation were reflected by the construction of schoolrooms in the crypt. These schoolrooms were not specifically for the use of children from the congregation, and at one time many young people from the city's Jewish community were educated there. The crypt was later to become an important centre for the arts.



Focussing on the church's stained glass, Dr Evangelisti next provided a detailed analysis of the windows in terms both of their artistry and their social history. She considered both their design and their role as memorials. Among these windows is one dedicated to the Andrews family, commissioned in 1866. Among the connections of this family is the Andrews family of Comber in Co.

Dylan Jones

The Experiences of the Irish POWs incarcerated at Frongoch internment camp, near Bala, after the 1916 Easter Rising

Down, distinguished for many reasons and famed for associations with the Titanic. She analysed the subject matter of the window, 'Suffer the little children', in the context of Unitarian theology, demonstrating the considerations underlying the commissioning of such a memorial. Attention was also given to the designers who produced the windows, both Irish and French. Among these was An Tur Gloine, the important Dublin-based firm whose work shared the approach of the Arts and Crafts movement, with its emphasis on mediaeval methods of producing stained glass. Windows in the St Stephen's Green church reflect developments within this Celtic Revivalist approach. Again, Dr Evangelisti related the artistry of the windows to the history they are designed to commemorate. Illustrating the window dedicated to Miss Margaret Huxley, who is particularly remembered for her pioneering work in nursing, she explained that this was created by an artist who trained with William Orpen before joining An Tur Gloine. (She also pointed out that T H Huxley, the biologist renowned as 'Darwin's Bulldog' and the coiner of the word 'agnostic', was Miss Huxley's uncle).

This paper provided a fascinating insight into the nature of the Dublin Unitarian Church, showing the many ways in which intangible aspects of its identity are given expression through the material culture of the building itself. We can look forward to reading this analysis in greater detail when it is published in due course in *Folk-life*.

Linda-May Ballard

Frongoch is a small upland village a few miles west of the town of Bala, in north-west Wales. It was served by a branch of the Great Western Railway, built over hills and moors to tap into the wealth generated by the slate industry at Blaenau Ffestiniog. That railway also served a shortlived whisky distillery at Frongoch, built in 1887 by a local landowner. The distillery had closed by 1910 (its product, allegedly, hardly bore comparison with its Scottish rival) and the buildings lay derelict until being reused as a German prisoner of war camp by 1915.

It is no exaggeration to say that what happened here, between June and December 1916, shaped modern Ireland. After the Easter Rising had been crushed by British troops, and the court martialling and subsequent execution of its principal leaders, rank and file volunteers were arrested and – initially - sent to prisons across England and Scotland. This policy was subsequently reviewed, and a decision taken to intern the Sinn Feiners at Frongoch. Its remoteness was perceived as an asset. The German POWs were removed, their place being taken by over 1800 Irish men.

The first internees arrived in June 1916. News of their imminent arrival had preceded them and Michael O'Flanagan, one of the Commanders of the Dublin Brigade, commented on the "very friendly reception from the Welsh people who had assembled in large numbers on the platform". Given that Bala is synonymous with Nonconformity, his comment that local people were "particularly anxious" to obtain souvenirs such as "Rosary Beads and other religious emblems" is fascinating.

Living conditions at the camp, according to accounts provided by internees, varied from being barely acceptable, to disgraceful. The camp doctor, a local man, on one occasion condemned a delivery of meat as being unfit for consumption – internees had been instructed to wash it in vinegar, to conceal the stench of rotting flesh. On the other hand, the internees had complete freedom within its perimeter, and ran it as a military institution – effectively, an Irish military college. Amongst its complement were future leaders such as Michael Collins, who learnt here the importance of evolving intelligence networks, as well as the mastery of guerilla warfare. Classes were held on

military matters and Irish history, and Gaelic was taught – all internees being impressed by the fact that so many local people spoke Welsh as a first language. Route marches into the local hills, and dental visits to Bala, provided plenty of opportunities for contact with locals, as well as to smuggle out and post a highly effective stream of propaganda material.

The camp was closed by the Prime Minister, David Lloyd George, in December 1916. He had understood by then that it was a bad idea, from the British Government's point of view, to lock up so many dissidents in the same place. An amnesty for all internees was announced, and they returned to Ireland as heroes. Within a few years, they would succeed in wresting control of most of their country from one of the most powerful empires in the world, and would establish the Irish Free State.

Dafydd Roberts

Linda Ballard

Robert M'Calmont of Mountpottinger, Belfast.

Linda presented a thought provoking paper on Robert McCalmont, a prominent 19th century promoter of radical Irish Unitarianism.

McCalmont was born in 1829 and would therefore have experienced the impact of famine, census evidence also showed that as a young man he lived with his widowed mother and uncle's family in Larne.

He was actively involved with the church, teaching in Sunday Schools and progressing to be instrumental in the establishment of a new congregation in Mountpottinger. By the 1860s McCalmont was associated with the more radical views in Unitarianism and this may have brought him into contact with the Ritchie family, themselves associated with these views. They ran a chemical business and made space available for a congregation to meet in their factory and it seems likely employed McCalmont as a salesman and this in turn may explain his becoming a Fellow of the Chemical Society in 1866. In turn he established himself in business by 1884 producing artificial fertiliser.

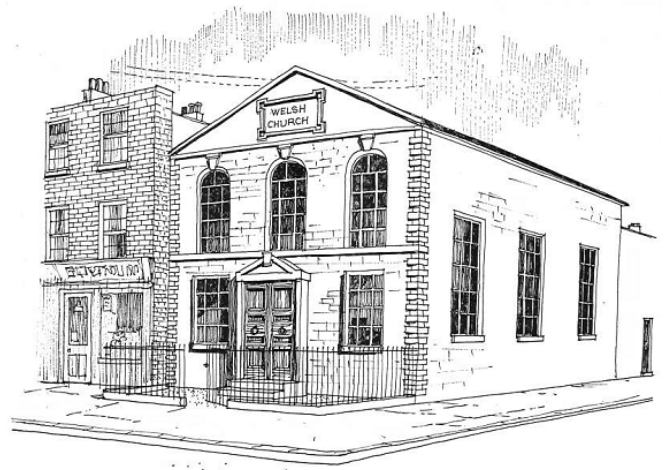
His politics were also radical with him standing as a Gladstonian Liberal in 1886. It also seems likely that he was a Freemason, this group may have assisted his education as a child without a father.

Linda concluded by suggesting that his early influences might be inextricably linked to his later interests, his enthusiasm for education, the central role of religion in his life and the focus of his business in supporting food production all stemming from the impact of events in his childhood. His life story is an example of the opportunities offered by the growing industrial power of Belfast in the 19th century.

Duncan M Dornan

Dafydd Roberts

The Welsh-speaking Methodist community in Dublin



Speaking with all the enthusiasms of his own personal heartlands in north-west Wales and in particular its diaspora, Dafydd presented the fruits of his study of one particular building in Dublin and its role in the life of the city over a century from 1838, as a focal point for Welsh speakers living, working or passing through Dublin.

Today the building is the Five Star Internet Cafe in Talbot Street, very brightly painted reflecting its ownership by the Chinese community. Since the Second World War it has been at various times William Griffiths' ladies shoe and fashion shop and then a snooker hall, serving the needs of an inner-city area close to the river Liffey and the Custom House.

But its glory days were as Bethel ('House of God'), planned, subscribed to, built and used by the city's Welsh community with dedication, enthusiasm and a stalwart independence of spirit. Dafydd recounted its story and its contribution to Dublin life.

Its main role was in support of visiting seafarers, crews on the Holyhead 'railway' route and also ships from Penrhyn and Pwllheli with their cargos of slates for Ireland. Welsh sea captains, men such as Capt'n Israel Mathews of Holyhead and Capt'n John Williams of Chester, were well aware of the perils and temptations awaiting sailors when they were ashore, which prompted them to go from ship to ship and tavern to tavern in Dublin gathering together seamen from Wales, so that they might attend services and prayer meetings on board ship.

There was also a sizeable resident Welsh community from the early 19th century on, from maids and servants to professionals. A building was needed, hence Bethel with funding support from bodies such as the Methodist Home Mission Society, established in Wrexham in 1813, which extended its boundaries in 1834 to include Gwynedd, Dublin and Runcorn.

Under pressure to enlighten Papists and have them return to their right faith, the task was to spread the scriptures and organise daily schools and Sunday Schools in order to stabilise Protestantism in Ireland. Bethel opened its doors four years later, the only Welsh chapel ever built in Ireland.

Dafydd credited key players in this story, such as John Parry, effectively a Welsh Methodist missionary in Dublin, a far from easy task. Bethel had room for 300 worshippers. By 1855 its congregation was reported as including five denominations: Church in Ireland, Wesleyans, Independents, Baptists and Methodists. Numbers increased through the 1860s and 70s, some travelling considerable distances to participate.

A gallery was added to seat another sixty, facing the pulpit and above the entrance; it was known as the 'quarterdeck', a reference harking back to its strong seafaring links. Revd John Lewis, a key player in the life of Bethel from the 1890s was widely known in the city as 'the Welsh priest', a man on good terms with Protestants and Papist alike.

Even in its later years Bethel maintained its presence. Ernest Blythe, Finance Minister in the Irish Government during the 1920s and a friend of Lewis, paying tribute to him remembered that 'I went there one Sunday morning to revel in the sound of a language closely related to Irish. That little Welsh-speaking congregation, maintaining its individuality in a foreign city, made a profound impression on me.'

By the time the property was sold off in 1944, there were thirteen members remaining, the fate of so many chapels of all denominations then and since.

A remarkable archive survives in the form of a BBC recording of the chapel's history, made in 1951, when six former chapel members came along to be interviewed. Their memories placed Bethel in the context of Dublin's dynamic early 20th century history, events of lasting significance to Ireland unfolding all around them.



©David Viner

David Viner

Ronnie Ballard

Changing the identity of a motorcycle

Through the story of one motorcycle, the Yamaha XT500, Ronnie Ballard's paper offered insight into the practicalities and philosophy of motorcycle restoration and modification. The XT500, launched in 1975, was an attempt by Yamaha to break into the US market, dominated by Harley Davidson. It was marketed as the first high-capacity 'trail bike', a term coined by Yamaha to refer to on-road/off-road dual-purpose bikes, and was easy to ride and maintain. Manufactured until 1981, it was hugely popular.

The paper highlighted the variety of reasons owners have for modifying or customising motorcycles: to enhance their looks or technical performance, as an expression of

individuality and personality, and even as a form of art. The underlying philosophy is one of problem solving, patience, and the importance of manual and mechanical skill and knowledge. Understanding this range of motivations can help explain the relative success of different motorcycle technologies.

The XT500 itself, for example, was purpose designed, but its road version, the SR500, was particularly easy to modify. A major constraint on modification is the availability of spare parts: engine parts are easier to source but cycles parts such as mirrors, bars and mudguards all rust and can be rarer. A re-launch of the SR500 in 2014 was commercially unsuccessful because the motorcycle was kick-start rather than electric-start, but the new models were nevertheless popular with owners for providing a good base of spares for those modifying older machines.

Modification of certain motorcycles can require a lot of knowledge (or trial-and-error experimentation). To re-wire a Yamaha's parking lights in order to pass a current UK MOT, for example, might require the use of wiring diagrams available only in Japanese. A bike's manufacturer might have long-since gone out of business, making parts scarce and information scarcer. Owner clubs and online forums provide supportive communities which can help people find parts and advice. Despite the challenge, Ronnie pointed out that 'the reward is the riding', as well as the expression of individuality and the satisfaction of completing the work by yourself.

Accompanying the paper were a number of restored motorcycle parts, newly appreciated by delegates having just heard about the skills and motivations responsible for their condition. This object engagement offered a reminder of a common theme throughout the conference: the interconnectedness of tangible and intangible heritage.

Felicity McWilliams

Cynthia Boyd

Sunshades and poke bonnets: the occupational folklife of beachwomen in Grand Bank, Newfoundland 1890-1940

Cynthia began her presentation with some orientation on the geography of the Grand Banks, off the coast of Newfoundland, itself off the coasts of Labrador and Quebec, which explains its position as one of the richest fishing grounds in the world, placed where the cold waters of the Labrador Current meet the warmth of the Gulf Stream.

This paper very much concentrated on the working lives of the female fishworkers, who have historically been ignored in favour of studies of the hard lives of their menfolk, graphically depicted in Sebastian Junger's non-fiction book *The Perfect Storm*, made into a rather bleak film released a few years later.

The fish were brought in by the fishing schooners whose crews worked often in small family groups and fished in the small open dories from the schooner. Weather conditions were treacherous, stormy and prone to frequent thick fogs, and could often result in loss of life.

Although some women did go out with the schooners, most were beach women who spread salted fish out to dry on the pebbly beaches, on 'spreads' and 'pilers', beginning at dawn each day.

8-10 women worked with a 'boss woman' – she would 'pick her crowd' according to their expertise. The women knew the weather and worked long days, sometimes if the weather changed they had to go back. The boss woman dealt with the tally man ('culler' man). It was also hard work for not generous reward, they earned \$90 - \$100 a season (it was still a colony at this time) for green fish to the beach.

Cynthia discussed the perennial problem of the researcher, that of being an incomer in a very close community, some women didn't want to talk to a 'stranger'. However, there was a breakthrough and one of the areas of most interest which emerged was not only the way of life and hard work, but also the traditional occupational dress still held in women's homes which was so suited to the harsh environment.

The most striking item was the sunbonnet, with tails and large brim to protect the women's face and neck. These were mostly dating to the 1920s-40s in the museum collection, but part of a much older tradition. The vernacular terms used to describe them included flake bonnet, poke bonnet, scolly, skilly, slouch and ugly. This last of course a term in general use to describe sunhats/shades from the 18th century onwards. Many women lost their men at sea, and then changed to dyed black bonnets, clothing, and apron.

The traditional style of dress survived here as it did in many other parts of the world where women worked out of doors and in harsh conditions. It had become part of their identity - only the women on the beaches wore the sunbonnet - so it became part of their belonging to the group, of a sense of ownership.

Further information can be found at
http://ngb.chebucto.org/Dist_Photo/bur-0712-fish-drying-1-grand-bank-1903.shtml
http://ngb.chebucto.org/Dist_Photo/bur-0308-grand-bank-drying-fish.shtml

Christine Stevens

Excursions

Visit to the National Folklore Collection, University College Dublin

As part of a full day as guests of UCD we were treated to a visit to the National Folklore Collection, housed in the John Henry Newman Building. This was of particular interest to me as, having worked for Manx National Heritage for many years, I am acutely aware of the close relationship which existed at several points in the past between the NFC (or Irish Folklore Commission as it was originally known) and the Manx Museum. The collection of folklore, folk customs and native language narratives on the Isle of Man developed in parallel, and indeed the IFC offered direct help in 1948 in making audio recordings on the Island.

I was not disappointed as the unassuming door from a basement corridor opened to reveal a treasure trove of riches. We were told that the collection holds some two million pages of text. When the IFC began collecting in the early 1930s, researchers would carry heavy recording

equipment on their bicycles, visiting the south and west initially (the strongholds of the Irish language at that time), in an effort to document that language. Early wax cylinders were transcribed then wiped, on the grounds of cost, but later recordings were preserved.

It was fascinating to discover the 'scientific' methods which the collectors used (based on the methods of the Scandinavians, the leaders in that field at the time) and the way in which they captured what we today would call the metadata of the subjects which they interviewed. Naturally, this type of collecting also drew in material culture (as it also did in the Isle of Man) and here again I was interested to discover the parallels. The three dimensional collection formed by the IFC, it turns out, is now held by the National Museum of Ireland. Any remaining doubt as to what a fabulous resource this archive is would have been blown away by a subsequent conversation with an academic working in this field, who told me that there was not a single topic she had come across for which she could not find documentation in the collection. Exciting steps are also now being taken to digitise the collection, making it even more accessible.

Matthew Richardson

Glasnevin Cemetery Tour

Delegates had the opportunity to attend a guided tour of Glasnevin Cemetery on Finglas Road, the final resting place of a million and a half people. Before the official guided tour began, many of us wandered about the museum, viewing the exhibits.

From the second floor the incredible vistas of the Cemetery can be seen from the large windows. Using allocated spaces wisely, architects and museum curators have incorporated helpful panels located directly beneath the windows providing visitors valuable information on the stylistic elements and motifs of gravestone design - Celtic, Gothic, and classical - featured on the grave markers and monuments in the Cemetery.

After viewing the Cemetery Museum for a half hour, we then re-assembled outside to meet with our tour guide, Paddy Gleeson. Before describing several famous monuments in detail, Mr. Gleeson impressed upon us the importance of Glasnevin as not only a place of historic significance but a place in which we must respect the dead and all those who mourn them. While acknowledg-



ing that Glasnevin Cemetery is an increasingly popular visitor attraction, Gleeson remarked that this cemetery's mandate is to continue its on-going conservation and preservation of its spaces for future generations. Evidence of this could be seen on grave markers with placards indicating "monument restored." Gleeson indicated that many of the gravestones were originally erected without actual foundations and therefore, they are slowly being refitted with proper foundations to stabilize them.

Before we viewed the most famous grave in Glasnevin, that of Michael Collins (1890-1922), Gleeson led us to the newly constructed wall of commemoration for all those who died during the Easter Rising. This black marble wall remembers and honours all those killed; revolutionaries, soldiers, policemen, women, children, and innocent bystanders whose names are listed alphabetically regardless of religious affiliation. Small tokens and homemade wreaths are left by mourners who visit regularly. It is Michael Collins' grave, however, that is likely the most visited grave at Glasnevin. As Collins' funeral was attended by a million people, it is not surprising that his grave is regularly adorned with fresh flowers by individuals or groups of mourners who return weekly and sometimes, daily.

After viewing this grave, we then walked to O'Connell's Tower, a massive landmark monument dedicated to the memory of Daniel O'Connell (1775-1847), "The Liberator." A champion of civil rights, O'Connell first campaigned for acquiring land such that both Irish Catholics

and Protestants could provide their dead with dignified burial. His campaign, for what later became Glasnevin Cemetery, followed on the heels of public outcry when a Protestant sexton was reprimanded by a Catholic priest for performing a shortened funeral mass. And although a young boy was the first person buried in the designated Cemetery at Prospect Square, the Cemetery was later relocated to Finglas Road where a wall was erected around Glasnevin with seven watchtowers for security in the hopes of deterring body snatchers as well as allowing for an indexing system in the identification of graves. Located directly beneath O'Connell's massive tower and the beautifully landscaped grounds surrounding it, a substantial vault is filled with the remains of O'Connell and those of his closest relatives. Mr. Gleeson led us into the vault where he explained the history of O'Connell's life and his "vision of Ireland."

As we were viewing O'Connell's vault, Gleeson made connections between some of Glasnevin Cemetery's history with that of the Society's conference presenters and presentation topics. Gleeson was an engaging storyteller whose vast knowledge of Glasnevin and its residents was impressive. When he finished describing the many embellishments decorating the walls and floor surrounding O'Connell's casket, including motifs taken from the *Book of Kells*, he then indicated that if any of us wanted luck in love or money, we should touch the sides of O'Connell's casket. When many of us filed out of the vault, I know I was not the only one to trail a hand alongside O'Connell's finely made casket.

We then proceeded to several notable and unusual graves, particularly in the Dublin section. Gleeson pointed out how coins could be seen on the top of many gravestones which was evidence of people's belief in "paying the ferryman for the journey into the next world." As we saw, however, many of the coins were located on the graves of soldiers, having been placed there by fellow soldiers over time. Gleeson then led us to the grave of Irish nationalist and poet Joseph Plunkett (1887-1916) and that of trade union leader Big Jim Larkin (1874-1947), whose grave was surrounded by a box hedge shaped in the form of a cross. We also viewed the gravestone of Jeremiah O'Donovan Rossa (1831-1915), a man known as 'the father of Independent Republicanism' who spent much of his life in exile in the United States.



At his death, he was granted a state funeral which was held at Glasnevin on August 1st, 1915 and attended by hundreds of mourners not least of which was Patrick/Pdraig Pearse whose moving graveside oration honouring O'Donovan Rossa and the Fenian Cause is increasingly revisited through present-day actors playing the part of Pearse during Glasnevin Cemetery tours. While our tour did not include the reenactment of Pearse's famous speech, remnants of his words could be heard in the stillness of the Cemetery that afternoon: "oh the fools, the fools...the fools!"



Some of the last graves we visited were those of several Irish and/or Irish-born women who had been laid to rest at this cemetery, including Maud Gonne MacBride (1867-1953), the long-time muse of William Butler Yeats. It was known that she refused Yeats' offers of marriage at least nine times, claiming on one occasion that she could never accept him because if she did, he would stop creating romantic poetry. We also observed the grave of Countess Constance Markievicz (1868-1927) who, along with her sister Eva, had been Yeats' childhood friend. This simple but elegant gravestone provided an interesting contrast to the more elaborate graves nearby. Markievicz was an artist, suffragette, and activist, but she was most known for her involvement in the fighting at Stephen's Green during the Easter Rising (a bust of Markievicz is located there). Although she did not take her seat when she was the first woman elected to the British House of Commons in 1918, she did fulfill her duties when she became the first woman to hold a cabinet position as the Minister of Labour of the Irish Republic (1919-1922).

It is truly amazing to consider all the stories lying behind the names and dates chiselled in the gravestones of people who lived and loved, laughed and cried, worked and died. Mr. Paddy Gleeson was an excellent guide whose soft voice and gracious manner provided both a wonderful history of Glasnevin Cemetery while revealing many fascinating anecdotes and narratives about specific individuals buried within. The cemetery is beautifully maintained by Glasnevin staff and lovingly tended by family members. It is a place that has inspired in me, and I suspect in others, the desire to return and spend many more hours exploring its hallowed grounds.

Dr. Cynthia Boyd



Walking Tour of Revolutionary Dublin

Through a mixture of informative talks and songs from Jerry O'Reilly and his companions the anniversary of the Irish Rebellion was vividly recalled on the last afternoon of our Folk Life Society Conference in Dublin. From

James Connolly's statue under the bridge at Beresford Place and in front of Dublin's Custom House we were given a sound grounding in the background of the Easter Rising which ultimately led to an Irish Republic a few short years later, realising Connolly's dream for Irish freedom and justice for workers.

We were taken through the streets of Dublin - seeing the sights and sounds of 21st century Dublin



but at the same time being taken back in time in song to unfolding events in the city a hundred years ago. Stopping at Moore Street and O'Rahilly Parade we were given an in depth summary of events in those particular areas. In less than a week large parts of the city was destroyed in the ensuing conflict and bullet holes can still be seen in Dublin buildings today in particular the General Post Office. Various songs were sung outside the GPO which captivated not only members of the Society but also the passing public.

From the GPO we were taken to the Garden of Remembrance located in the northern part of the city, a garden dedicated to the memory of 'all those who gave their lives in the cause of Irish Freedom'. The site of the Garden is of great significance to the Irish - it was here where the Irish Volunteers were founded in 1913 and where several leaders of the Rising were held overnight



before being taken to Kilmainham and subsequent execution. The Garden was designed by Dáithí Hanly with its focal point being the statue of the Children of Lir by Oisín Kelly which symbolises rebirth and resurrection.

A highly successful Folk Life Conference came to an end at the Cobblestone public house, a traditional Irish music bar and venue. For those still remaining we were entertained by authentic Irish fiddlers and pipers. Many thanks to Jerry O'Reilly and his friends for such an informative and entertaining Sunday afternoon in Dublin!

Dylan Jones

Minutes of the Society's Annual General Meeting

Held on Sunday 11 September 2016 at Trinity College, Dublin

Present: The President (Linda Ballard) and 20 members

Apologies:

Apologies were received from Caroline Oates, Heather Holmes, Prof. K. Kawashima and John Baldwin.

Minutes of the last AGM:

These had been printed in the Newsletter. They were proposed by Christine Stevens (Seconded by David Viner) & adopted by the meeting as a correct record.

President's Report:

Linda was pleased to say that she had nothing to report on this occasion, but wished to thank all of the office bearers of the Society for their continued efforts on its behalf. In particular she wished to thank those involved in organising the conference and the editors.

Treasurer's Report:

Duncan had little to report. Subscriptions were down slightly, but cost of printing & dispatch of newsletter had also gone down. Taylor & Francis had a very different approach to money than Maney's had. When requested they send money much more quickly. The balance in the account was £16,700 and Duncan circulated a balance sheet for 2015/16. As always, this is just a snapshot and can vary according to where we are in the year. Overall the financial situation was stable. The question was raised as to where we are with our contract with Taylor and Francis, and the answer was one year into a three

year contract. We are however in a strong position in this regard, with an offer from Edinburgh to take on the journal (see below). The accounts were proposed by Christine Stevens and seconded by Catherine Wilson.

Editors' Reports:

Journal:

Lillis reported that Volume 54/2 was almost ready for production. Regarding Volume 54/1, some errors had not been picked up at the proof stage and had gone through to the print version. However, everything had now been corrected on the online version. For 54/2 we have a new production editor Alison Campbell and now also a copy editor. At the same time Lillis had received an email from Graham Nuttall at the University of Edinburgh who continues to court us. This gives us another option to consider when our current publication contract runs out. The comment was made in regard to Taylor & Francis that many Canadian universities had ceased to stock their journals due to the cost – something to bear in mind. Linda thanked Lillis for his report.

Newsletter:

Elaine reported that the last newsletter went out in the spring. She commented that latterly the newsletter had got later and later. If conference reviews could be in by mid November this would be greatly appreciated. Just one late person can hold up the entire process. Anyone needing a crib sheet for style points can get one from Elaine, but 500 words is ideal.

Website Officer's Report: Linda had received a written report from Heather in her absence.

Secretary's Report: Matthew reported that he had nothing of note to raise at the AGM.

Membership Secretary's Report: Dylan reported that we currently have 167 individual members, which is slightly down on the previous year. However there were no problems to report. A member asked if it was possible using the membership database to break down the membership geographically and identify if there were clusters in any one location. This might help us to target study days for example. Dylan said that he would look into this. A suggestion was made that each member should try to recruit at least one new member each. Various suggestions were made as to how this could be done, eg flyers. It was noted that when Mared was membership secretary a few years ago she produced a postcard to attract new members. Worth trying again? We could also download

something from the newsletter? The Special Subject Networks might also be useful for promoting the society. Events like the conference also useful for promoting membership.

Conference Secretary's report:

Steph noted that the quality of papers this year was excellent. There had been a slight issue with the restaurant, but that was the only hiccup. Evaluation forms had been sent out – please return these to Steph, as they form a key part in shaping what happens over the next few years. Steph extended his thanks to Lillis and Linda for their efforts in organising this year's conference. We had been welcomed royally by all at UCD, and thanks in particular to Bairbre for her help on that side of things. The next conference is in Ayrshire and the structure for that is being developed now. Dates are 14-17 September 2017. Various themes are being developed. For 2018 the dates are not fixed as yet but the aim is to go to St Fagans to see the results of the major redevelopment there. Due to open 1 March 2018. One theme which was suggested was how Folk Life has developed. For 2019 the venue is potentially Galway with Cornwall mentioned for 2020.

Election of Officers

All of the officers had agreed to continue to serve. A new reviews editor, Felicity McWilliams had also agreed to serve and she was welcomed and thanked by the president. Several members of council are due to step down so new members are as follows:

Paul Coghlan (proposed by Michael Larkin. Seconded by Patricia O'Hare)

Kelly Fitzgerald (proposed by Catherine Wilson. Seconded by Steph Mastoris)

Barbara Hillers (proposed by Linda Ballard. Seconded by Bob Powell)

Beth Thomas (proposed by Dafydd. Seconded by Dylan Jones)

Claudia Kinmonth (proposed by Cozette Griffin-Kremer. Seconded by Linda Ballard.)

In recognition of her long association with the Society, and for her sterling work for many years as reviews editor, it was proposed that Cozette Griffin-Kremer be appointed an honorary member of council. Proposed by Christine Stevens, seconded by Paul Coghlan. This was unanimously agreed. Lillis also thanked Cozette for her help in sending reviews and added that he looked forward to working with Felicity.

Any Other Business

It was announced that Steph Mastoris had been appointed a Deputy Lieutenant of the County of West Glamorgan. Disappointingly the role did not require him to wear tights, but the meeting unanimously offered Steph its congratulations on his appointment.

The President closed the meeting.

Recent Publications

Women Warriors of World War II

This book tells the story that Scottish women played during WWII.

Dr. Jeanette B. Reid.

144 pages, with illustrations

Available via the author drjbraid23@tampabay.rr.com

If emailing Jeanette please include

Women Warriors in the subject box.

Eaglesham

The Farmlands and the Orry

Susan Hunter, MA, FSA Scot.

Drawing on 20 years archaeological research of the area the book brings together the most interesting elements of what Susan and Robert Hunter discovered over this period.

305 pages, with illustrations

Available via the author

susanh@meskhant.co.uk

Forthcoming Conferences, Seminars & Meetings

AIMA International Association of Agricultural Museums

AIMA's triennial Congress "CIMA" is to be held in Estonia 10-15 May, 2017. As many SFLS members remember, the Society was crucial in helping the AIMA relaunch through an outstanding meeting in Kitchside in 2012, when the agricultural historian François Sigaut was able to reconnect with SFLS members and friends.

As he so wished, the AIMA is expanding beyond Europe and North America to India, Japan and Australia. We would be delighted to have you share the good company and array of discussions about the present and future of agricultural museums worldwide. Please check out the website and join us in Estonia!
<http://cima2017.eu/welcome/>

**President Merli Sild invites you to Estonia
For CIMA 18 / 10-15 May 2017
Estonian National Agricultural Museum
“Traditions and Change – Sustainable Futures”**



Obituaries



Jonathan Bell 1949-2016

The sad news about Jonathan’s passing caused a great shock among the folklore and folklife community in June 2016, a feeling matched by the large attendance at his funeral service in Belfast. Jonathan took his MA (1975) and Ph.D. (1982) at the Queen’s University of Belfast and in 1976 took up a position as curator at the Ulster

Folk and Transport Museum where he worked until his early retirement in 2006. He was thereafter free to continue his research work on Irish traditional farming and his many publications, often carried out with his colleague Mervyn Watson, reflect his interest in all manner of farming techniques and practices. Jonathan learned Irish as an adult and was a fluent speaker of Donegal Irish, something which helped him greatly in his research. He edited *Ulster Folklife* for many years and was a regular attendee at conferences, the last one being the annual conference in Killarney in 2013. His work stands as a monument to his industry and talent. A longer obituary appears in *Folk Life* 55:1. *Maireann an crann ar an fhál ach ní mhaireann an lámh a chuir*. The tree continues to grow, though the hand that planted it has gone.

Lillis Ó Laoire

Bruce Walker 1936-2016

The Society sadly notes the passing of Bruce Walker who was for many years a member and contributor to SLFS conferences. He published in a wide variety of journals including *Folk Life* on topics as diverse as vernacular architecture and the curing of white fish. His member’s papers were invariably looked forward to with immense anticipation, and he participated in numerous field trips.

Lillis Ó Laoire

Good to know

Scottish agricultural implement makers

Are you interested in the history of Scottish agricultural implements and machines? Do you want to know more about who made implements and machines in Scotland from the mid-nineteenth century onwards until recent times? Do you want to know about their manufactures and the wider context in which they were made and used? Do you want to know where you can see their manufactures today?

Scottish agricultural implement makers is an electronic based resource on the web, facebook and twitter that lets you know about the making of Scottish agricultural implements and machines until recent times.

The Scottish agricultural implement makers website at <http://blog.scottishagriculturalimplementmakers.co.uk/>

includes a wide range of information on the Scottish agricultural implement makers and their manufactures. This includes resources to find out more about the makers and their manufactures, key Scottish agricultural books, and the vintage machinery rallies that are held throughout the country where you may be able to see implements and machines. There are also regular articles on a wide range of aspects of the makers and their manufactures.

Scottish agricultural implement makers is also on facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/scottishagriculturalimplementmakers/>. This page posts short articles on a range of aspects on the making and use of Scottish agricultural implement and machine makers and their manufactures. This includes articles on particular makers and their companies, their manufactures, particular types of implements and machines, period cameos, trials and exhibitions. There are also postings from the major Scottish vintage agricultural machinery rallies. There is a seasonal emphasis to articles.

Inaugural prize winner

In early 2015 Claudia Kinmonth was involved in her Research Fellowship at the Moore Institute of the National University of Ireland, Galway. The research facilitated by N.U.I. Galway, resulted in a 7,500 word

article on a previously neglected aspect of Irish furnishings: a multi-purpose vessel called a Noggin.

The results were published in the journal *Irish Architectural and Decorative Studies* (vol. XVIII, 2015), pp. 130-151. Having just completed “Noggins ‘the nicest work of all’: traditional Irish wooden vessels for eating and drinking” she came across an essay competition in spring 2016, with a tempting €1,000 prize, calling for ‘the best essay on the Irish decorative arts’. Put forward by the council and members of The Irish Antique Dealers Association, in memory of one of their past members the late Paul Johnston Senior (1917-1979). A shortened version of the Noggins research, rewritten for the competition won their inaugural prize. The essay is reprinted having first been published in *The Antiques Journal*, (Issue Autumn 2016), pp.38-40 in conjunction with the I.A.D.A. fair at the RDS.

Congratulations Claudia.

More Good News

Our President Linda Ballard was ordained as a minister at the First Presbyterian Non-Subscribing Church Dunmurry on 18th February 2017.

Many congratulations Linda.



A number of you will no doubt recall the excellent presentation on Soviet posters given by Society member Ula Chwalińscy who travelled from Poland to be at the conference several years ago now. Well, I'm very happy to announce that Ula and her husband Andrzej have just become parents to beautiful baby Stefan Franciszek born on February 21 at 7:57 a.m.



A word from mum 'Stefan sends his love to all of the Folk Life Society members'.

Many congratulations Ula and Andrzej.

Have you, or are you about to change *your* address?

If so, please let Dylan, the membership secretary know.

Email address: lunedaioan@yahoo.co.uk

Take a look at your Society's website

www.folklifestudies.org.uk

The contents of all issues of *Folk Life* are listed as well as core information about the Society, including a membership form along with notices of Society meetings and conferences and the text of the *Newsletter*. The site is also available for members to post relevant information. Please send text as e-mail attachments to the website officer

Members' online access to Folk Life

Society for Folklife Studies members have access to the full online issues of Folk Life and Gwerin.

When you subscribed you will have provided our Membership Secretary with an email address. You will need this address to create your account to get access to the online issues of Folk Life and Gwerin.

Go to www.tandfonline.com and register with your email address. Once your account has been verified and you are logged in, you will see the Taylor and Francis Welcome screen. Please click "Your Account" next to your recognised name at the top of the screen.

Online access to the journal is reached via "Account settings" and "view your access". You will then find the journal name in the "Subscription" tab.

Heather.Holmes@scotland.gsi.gov.uk

Contributions/comments should be forwarded to the newsletter editor Elaine Edwards at e.edwards@nms.ac.uk Printed & published by the Society for Folk Life Studies, spring 2017. All opinions expressed are those of the contributors and do not represent the policies or views of the Society.