

centre*news* – December 1999

Introduction

Dear Members & Friends of the Centre for Irish-German Studies, welcome to the end-of-year *centrenews* edition.

This is issue number three of *centrenews* and we hope that you will find it interesting reading. Our newsletter is published regularly for the Members and Friends of the Centre for Irish-German Studies and for all those with an interest in relations between Ireland and the German speaking world.

1999 has been another active and productive year in the still very young history of the Centre. Probably the most publicly visible event was the [2nd Limerick Conference in Irish-German Studies](#), held at the University of Limerick from 2-4 September. We are happy to inform our Members and Friends that some of the speakers have agreed to furnish a written version of their presentation which will be published in the forthcoming edition of the Yearbook of the Centre for Irish-German Studies.

**With 1999 drawing to a close,
we wish to extend season's greetings to all our Members and Friends,
and cordially invite you to the Centre's Christmas Reception on Friday,
10 December, 4 pm, in Plassey House, University of Limerick.**

The Centre is looking forward to another enterprising year. You will find information about what we are planning for the coming 12 months in this newsletter, and we would very much like to welcome you at the Centre – as a fellow academic, a visitor to one of our events, and as a Member or Friend of the Centre.

Make the connection – and join the Centre for Irish-German Studies today.

Dr Joachim
Fischer

Dr Gisela Holfter

Dr Joachim Lerchenmueller

Dr Veronica
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Joint Directors,
Centre of Irish-German Studies

Editors, *centrenews*

Ireland and Germany – 50 years on

The Centre hosted its [Second Limerick Conference](#) on 2–4 September 1999, in collaboration with the Centre for European Studies at the University of Limerick and the German Academic Exchange Service (daad).

Once again, the University of Limerick provided the venue for an interesting and inspiring exchange of ideas on current developments in Irish-German Studies. Distinguished scholars in the fields of German/Irish Studies, Sociology, Political Science and Cultural Studies convened in Limerick to contrast and compare respective developments in Ireland and Germany over the past 50 years. Among the many highlights of the proceedings was the talk by former taoiseach Dr Garret Fitzgerald on Ireland and the European Union.

The conference marked the semi-centenary of historical events in the two countries' respective history: On Easter Monday 1949 Ireland was officially declared a Republic. In Germany, only weeks later, on 24 May, the Basic Law (Grundgesetz) came into effect and established the Federal Republic of Germany. On 7 October of the same year the German Democratic Republic was founded. Numerous and distinguished speakers from Ireland, Germany, Britain and the United States, compared and contrasted the respective experiences, continuities and discontinuities in Ireland and Germany in a number of crucial areas over the intervening 50 years, addressing an audience well in excess of 100. The joint organization of the conference by the Centre for Irish-German Studies and the Centre for European Studies, in co-operation with the German Academic Exchange Service, has proved very successful and further strengthened the excellent working relationship between the two UL-based research centres.

The second edition of The Yearbook of the Centre for German–Irish Studies is being prepared for publication. Due out in spring, it will hopefully build on the success and receive as warm a reception as did the first issue.

Yearbook 1999/2000

The Yearbook aims to provide all those interested in Ireland and Germany with up-to-date information on current affairs, trends and new perspectives in Irish-German relations, covering matters political, social, economic, cultural and academic.

Among the many interesting contributions to feature in this year's edition, is a selection of the papers given at the 2nd Conference in Irish-German Studies; a detailed conference report; a report on the Frankfurt Book Fair's touring exhibition "The Neighbours' Voices – German Books and Authors in Dublin and Belfast" and an article on German-Irish relations in the world of art. In accordance with the Centre's firm commitment to focus on Ireland's relations with the German speaking countries, as opposed to Germany only, the upcoming edition of the Yearbook will include contributions on Irish-Austrian and Irish-Swiss relations, such as an article on the Austrian romancier Christoph Ransmayr; on the Wild Geese in Austria; a report on Irish-Swiss church connections; and annual reports by the Austrian and Swiss Embassies. The Centre is glad that the Yearbook's section detailing "The year's work in Irish-German

relations" has been particularly welcomed by many of our readers, and that a number of institutions have agreed to join in contributing annual reports. *If your organization/institution is interested in being included in this section, please contact the editors, [Gisela Holfter](#) and [Joachim Lerchenmueller](#).*

The 1999/2000 issue is due to appear in spring, 2000. You can avail of the reduced subscription rate of £ 15 or buy both editions (1998/99 and 1999/2000) for £ 30 only, incl. p&p, when ordering before 1 February 2000.

The Centre goes online ...

The Centre for Irish-German Studies will soon be on the internet ! The Centre's homepage will provide information on upcoming events, details of the Limerick Conferences in Irish-German Studies,

current research projects, and the Centre's publications. In addition, you can access previous editions of *centrenews*, get information about the Yearbook and use our collection of links to visit homepages of other Irish-German organizations.

Visit us at <http://www.ul.ie/~lcs/irish-german.html> and see for yourself.

Dr Veronica O' Regan is due to publish a book on Ingeborg Bachmann's *Simultan* in Peter Lang's *Austrian Culture* series early next year entitled "*Dieses Spannungsverhältnis, an dem wir wachsen.*" *Growth and Decay in Ingeborg Bachmann's 'Simultan'*.

Spreading the word ...

The *Simultan* volume has to date been the object of surprisingly little critical attention. Commentators have tended to see it as part of the *Todesarten* cycle of novels and interpret it as pessimistic in its vision of language and society. This study underlines the uniqueness of the *Simultan* volume in Bachmann's *oeuvre*. It acknowledges Bachmann's criticism of language and society but argues that this is counterpointed by a utopian impulse. An examination of Bachmann's relationship with Wittgenstein and of her utopian concept of literary language combined with an analysis of narrative devices in the volume justify the argument that this collection of stories is informed by a utopian dialectic, which is essentially hopeful regarding the possibility of change in society.

Lars Kabel M.A., Lektor of German at UL and editor of the Centre's webpage, has just published an ethnographic contribution on "*Das Irische als kulturelle Zweitsprache in Belfast*", based on his fieldwork in Belfast in 1994/95.

The article appeared in Zimmer, Stefan / Ködderitzsch, Rolf / Wigger, Arndt (Hg.): *Akten des Zweiten deutschen Keltologen-Symposiums*. (Bonn, 2.-4. April 1997). Buchreihe der Zeitschrift für celtische Philologie, Bd. 17. Tübingen: Niemeyer 1999, 96-104.

Dr Veronica O' Regan has been invited to give a seminar on *Northern Ireland and the Peace Process* at the Fachhochschule Aargau, Switzerland in January 2000. The Fachhochschule offers courses in the areas of engineering, business and design. This seminar is being organised primarily for Business students who are learning English.

It is the second seminar on this topic to be held at the Fachhochschule Aargau. The first one held in April 1999 proved extremely successful, the students displaying a high level of knowledge and understanding of the current situation in the North of Ireland.

Visit by Austrian Ambassador

In the course of his visit to Limerick on Friday, 19 November, the Centre was happy to be given the opportunity to introduce His Excellency Paul Leifer, Austrian Ambassador to Ireland, and his wife to the work of the Centre for Irish-German Studies.

The Centre gratefully received a considerable number of books donated by a number of German publishing houses, the Goethe Institut, Dublin, and – via the International Division of the Frankfurt Book Fair – by the Auswärtige Amt.

Funding & Donations

They were added to the Centre's collection of German-Irish material which is accessible on the ground floor in the UL Library and Information Services Building. The Centre collection of video tapes and CD-ROMs is located in the Language Resource Area (Main Building, area A1), where items can be borrowed during opening hours. The Centre is in the process of creating [a comprehensive database of published material](#) available in the Centre's collection, to be available on the Centre's homepage soon.

Thanks ...

It is the express aim of the Centre to initiate, moderate and further collaboration between people & institutions in Ireland and the German speaking countries.

The Centre would therefore avail of the opportunity to thank everybody in Austria, Germany, Ireland and Switzerland who has, in the course of this year, extended their advice, support and collaboration to the Centre. In particular, we would like to express our gratitude to the UL Centre for European Studies, especially Prof Edward Moxon-Browne, for his co-operation in organizing the 2nd Limerick Conference in Irish-German Studies; the German Academic Exchange Service; the Goethe Institut, Dublin, the German Embassy in Dublin; GIC Promotions, Düsseldorf; and the International Division of the Frankfurt Book Fair. Very special thanks go to Mr Reinhold Würth and Würth Ireland Ltd., for sponsoring 2 Würth Postgraduate Scholarships in Irish-German Studies, and to those persons and organizations that generously sponsored the 2nd Limerick Conference – the European Commission; German Embassy; Holmes O'Malley Sexton, especially Jim Sexton; Kostal Ireland; Sifa Ltd.; Teles Ireland Ltd.; Bank of Ireland.

Plans for 2000 ...

The Centre is currently devising its calendar of events in the coming year. Among the various activities are:

The Centre will continue its successful spring semester lecture series with three lectures on Irish-German business connections scheduled to take place between February and April 2000. For further information please contact [Dr Gisela Holfter](#).

As in the previous two years, the Centre will co-operate with GIC Promotions, Düsseldorf, and the Goethe Institut, Dublin, in bringing the German-Irish Masterclasses for wind and brass instruments to the University of Limerick this coming August. For the first time, the UL-based Irish World Music Centre will also be closely involved in this venture.

More information on events and activities will be available in the spring edition of *centrenews* and on the Centre's webpage.