

Centre news

October 2019 No. 22

WELCOME TO OUR 2019 EDITION OF THE CENTRE FOR IRISH-GERMAN STUDIES NEWSLETTER!

This edition of our newsletter is a bumper edition, with lots of news, events, new appointments and sadly, news of a great loss. The sudden passing of Mr Jürgen Gottschalk in late October, only weeks after we received from him the bulk of probably the biggest collection of German material about Ireland, the Gottschalk Collection, has come as a terrible shock. His generosity will be remembered and his legacy useful for generations of students and researchers. Ar dheis Dé go raibh a anam.

But there is good news as well, most of all the award of the Jean Monnet Chair in European Cultural Studies to Joachim Fischer. This is a well-deserved honour for the co-founder and long term joint director of our Centre who has for many years also been active in European Studies. It has consequences for the Centre for Irish-German Studies as well where Gisela Holfter will continue as sole director, Joachim Fischer will act as deputy director. He is due to head the Centre for European Studies.

There is no question that Ireland has moved into the limelight of international affairs and become a centre of attention in European affairs not least due to Brexit. Austrian Chancellor Sebastian Kurz's first trip subsequent to Austria taking over the Presidency of the Council of the European Union on 1 July 2018 brought him to Dublin. Earlier in the year a review of Irish-German relations was launched in Dublin at an event attended by German Foreign Minister Heiko Maas. The President of Ireland, Michael D. Higgins, went to Germany on a three-day state visit in July 2019. Great to see this ever increasing level of exchange!

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Welcome to our 2019 edition of the Centre for Irish-German Studies newsletter!	1
Remembering Jürgen Gottschalk	3
Congratulations! Dr Joachim Fischer appointed Jean Monnet Professor in European Cultural Studies	4
New Advisory Board	4
New members	5
Past events 2019 and 2018	6
Upcoming events	20
Hermann Rasche: Reflecting on almost 50 years in Ireland	24
New Collaborations	30
Publications	31
Please support the Centre!	32

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REMEMBERING JÜRGEN GOTTSCHALK



We are very saddened by Jürgen Gottschalk's sudden death on 26 October 2019. Jürgen Gottschalk was one of our most knowledgeable contemporaries in Irish-German studies and he was always happy to share his immense scholarship. He truly enjoyed promoting Irish-German friendship and collected all printed material about Ireland for decades, thereby creating one of the largest private book collections on Ireland existing. Having studied

Celtic Studies at Würzburg University, his love for Ireland was cemented during a long bicycle tour across Ireland in his student days. He founded the Würzburg Irish-German Society in 1986 which he led for more than 25 years. As Würzburg is one of the key places to visit for any Irish president, due to its many links with Ireland, Jürgen had the pleasure of meeting all who came, including Michael D. Higgins on his recent visit in July.

Jürgen was a good friend of the Centre for Irish-German Studies. He donated his substantial collection of German material about Ireland to the Centre, which arrived just three weeks ago. The Gottschalk Collection will be officially opened to the public on 14 November by German Ambassador Deike Potzel at the international colloquium to commemorate 90 years of Irish-German diplomatic links. We had hoped Jürgen and his wife Traute would be with us on this occasion. Instead, it will provide an occasion to remember Jürgen in gratitude. We are glad to be able to continue Jürgen's work to some extent; his collection will be a wonderful resource for researchers and students alike and a

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lasting reminder of a unique personality, combining great learning, love of teaching and true kindness and generosity.

CONGRATULATIONS! DR JOACHIM FISCHER APPOINTED JEAN MONNET PROFESSOR IN EUROPEAN CULTURAL STUDIES



Dr Joachim Fischer, who together with Dr Gisela Holfter founded the Centre for Irish-German Studies in 1997 and has been joint director with her since, was awarded a Jean Monnet Chair in European Cultural Studies in September 2019. He is therefore now heading the Centre for European Studies with whom we always enjoyed good relations and indeed have organised a good number of events in the past – this is likely to increase in future. Joachim will remain involved in Irish-German Studies but

serve as Deputy Director, Gisela has taken over as Director of the Centre for Irish-German Studies.

NEW ADVISORY BOARD

We have a new Advisory Board in place: David Donoghue (former Irish ambassador to Germany, Austria, Russia and the UN), Dublin; Dr Helmut Freudenschuss, Austrian ambassador (ex officio), Dublin; Dr Nicholas O'Brien, Irish ambassador to Germany (ex officio), Berlin; Seán Ó hUiginn (former Irish ambassador to Germany, US and Italy), Dublin; Prof. Emer

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O'Sullivan (external examiner for the MA in Irish/German Studies, ex officio), Leuphana Universität Lüneburg; Deike Potzel, German ambassador (ex officio), Dublin, Dr Beate Schuler, Bad Homburg and Louis-José Tournon, Swiss ambassador (ex officio), Dublin.

We would like to thank our previous UL Advisory Board members, Prof. Mary O'Sullivan, Prof. Margaret Harper and Prof. Huw Lewis, sincerely for their support over the last years.

NEW MEMBERS

Dr Róisín Healy



Dr Róisín Healy is a Senior Lecturer in History at NUI Galway. She holds a PhD in German History from Georgetown University and is the author of *The Jesuit Specter in Imperial Germany* (2003). Her current research focuses on transnational and comparative perspectives on modern Ireland, Poland, and Germany. She published the monograph, *Poland in the Irish Nationalist Imagination, 1772-1922: Anticolonialism within Europe*, in 2017, and is now writing a comparative history of Prussian policy in Poland and British policy in Ireland from the 1840s to

World War I. She has published several edited volumes, two of which deal with Irish-German relations, *Small Nations and Colonial Peripheries in World War I* (2016) and *1916 in Global Context: An Anti-Imperial Moment* (2018).

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PAST EVENTS 2019 AND 2018

Guest lecture: Dr Deirdre Byrnes: Seán O’Casey and his Reception in the GDR



On 29 October 2019, we had the pleasure of welcoming external centre member Dr Deirdre Byrnes (NUI Galway) to the University of Limerick. Deirdre’s talk focused on two neglected aspects of Seán O’Casey’s reception in the GDR. She first explored how an extract from the writer’s memoirs was appropriated in the GDR language classroom in order to achieve certain didactic and ideological goals – educating young learners of English “im Geiste des Sozialismus”. The second part of her talk considered the equally politicised *Nachworte* – commentaries that accompanied the publication in the GDR of O’Casey’s multi-volume autobiography and of his plays. Deirdre argued that both sources reinforced a perception in the anti-fascist state not only of O’Casey as the great proletarian playwright of his day, but of Ireland and its people as oppressed and impoverished by the yoke of British imperialism. Following the very well received talk there was a lively question and answer session.

Operation Shamrock

The Operation Shamrock roundtable discussion and exhibition took place on 10 October 2019 in the Appellate Court in UL. Dr Gisela Holfter introduced the chair of the discussion board Jérôme aan de Wiel, Monica Brandis the project manager of the exhibition

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and two of the former children who participated in Operation Shamrock, Klaus Armstrong-Braun and Friedhelm Krüll.

Operation Shamrock was part of a larger project set up by the Red Cross for children from Europe after the Second World War. Children from different parts of Europe that suffered during and post war were provided with refuge in other countries. Operation Shamrock gave German children from disadvantaged backgrounds a better chance in life in Ireland. It was a short term stay of up to three years in Ireland for most of the Operation Shamrock children. Five hundred German children came to Ireland after WWII. Fifty German children stayed permanently in Ireland.

The project manager Monica Brandis, a journalist who is currently living in Berlin, decided to conduct research on the Operation Shamrock children who came to Ireland. She obtained funding from the Irish and German Embassy for her research. She got in contact with many of the Operation Shamrock children and received both positive and negative feedback. Eighteen of the former children responded positively and Monica learned from her research that they were eager to talk and have their past acknowledged.

The roundtable discussion largely consisted of two of the former children's experiences of the Operation Shamrock scheme. Their experience of Ireland is worth recounting.

Klaus Armstrong-Braun never heard of Ireland before he left Germany. After the war, Klaus was put into an orphanage because his mother was killed when he was four years of age. Klaus's experience in Ireland was challenging. He remembered that he stayed with thirteen families within ten years in Ireland and felt not informed most of the time. At the age of thirteen, Klaus left school and Barnardo's Children's Charity intervened. He moved to Chester in England where he settled and started an

apprenticeship. Klaus felt he lost his identity when he left Germany as he was constantly “moving from one bit of land to another.” Klaus’s experience in Ireland was lonesome.



Left to right: Monica Brandis, Friedhelm Krüll, H.E. Deike Potzel, Dr Gisela Holfter, Klaus Armstrong-Braun

Friedhelm Krüll’s experience was far more positive. He can remember being examined by a nurse at the railway station in Düsseldorf and being told “he was going on a trip”. He was excited since food was scarce in Germany. In Glencree he felt alone as he was waiting on a family. On 8 January 1947, Friedhelm was chosen by an Irish family, the Cotters. There were three children in the family and Friedhelm felt that it was very kind of them to take in a child who did not even speak the language. He stayed in Galway for three years with them before moving together to Dublin. The father of the Cotter family learned German in order

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to communicate with Friedhelm. He attended school in Galway and Dublin. When he returned to Germany, he was unable to speak German. Friedhelm kept in contact with his Irish family. Two of his Irish sisters, who also attended the discussion, underlined Friedhelm's deep bond with his Irish family and how proud their father was of Friedhelm and Friedhelm in turn never missed a birthday of their mother. He felt he did not experience any cultural disconnection in Ireland and was glad he got the opportunity to come to Ireland.

Monica concluded the discussion by clarifying that the experience in Ireland of the Operation Shamrock children was influenced by external factors, where they lived and the child's personality. Their experience was also shaped by their past in Germany. Operation Shamrock was Ireland's first attempt of hosting children from countries such as France and Germany and was, therefore, a learning process. She underlined that the Operation Shamrock needed improvement, especially in the areas of information supply for children and families and the supervision of children. Nevertheless, Monica states that Operation Shamrock "saved many children's lives".

The German Ambassador H.E. Deike Potzel opened the exhibition of the eighteen Operation Shamrock children. She stated that the mutual support of countries is very important in this day and age and Operation Shamrock is a strong foundation that must not be forgotten. The Ambassador highlighted the significance of the connection between Germany and Ireland and said she hoped that everyone would keep the connection alive and active.

Eva-Maria Stüdtje and Katie Walsh

Gabrielle Alioth, *The Poet's Coat – Der Mantel der Dichterin* (2019): Reading of Selected Poems



The acclaimed Swiss writer Gabrielle Alioth is a regular guest at the University of Limerick, this time she was accompanied by her fellow Swiss author and poet Fred Kurer. On 8 October 2019, they presented their bilingual version of her poems with Fred reading the poems in German and Gabrielle herself reading them aloud in their original English form. The readings were then followed by a lively discussion in which she explained why she writes her poetry in English. Her primary reasoning for doing so is that she finds it easier to express her feelings in English and that she discovered poetry in Ireland. This provided a perfect opportunity for Alioth to elaborate on her feelings of “home”. Alioth is Swiss, however, she has spent many years in Ireland, and she shared with the group her understanding of “home”. She finds that “home” is a country that one experiences as

a child, however, she feels that Ireland shaped her more than Switzerland did.

Joanne Maloney and Anna Roshchina

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A visit from Hugo Hamilton to the University of Limerick

As a prominent contemporary voice of Irish-German relations, author Hugo Hamilton was again a welcomed guest at the University of Limerick on 20 September 2019, to read his latest publication *Dublin Palms*. In addition to a public reading and a book signing, he was a guest at the MA Irish-German



Gisela Holfter and Hugo Hamilton

Studies course *Literature of Migration* and supported by the School of English, Irish and Communication and the MA in Creative Writing. Hamilton gave insights into his personal history and writing, which contributed greatly to the literary and bibliographical discussion that followed.

His acclaimed memoir *The Speckled People* was the main text discussed in the *Literature of Migration* class. A relaxed environment allowed for the free flow of questions which the class had prepared prior to the event. Hamilton's willingness to impart information undoubtedly fuelled student's enthusiasm to take part. The second part of the event involved a public reading workshop. Additional students and academic staff joined as Hamilton read and discussed excerpts from *Dublin Palms*. While Hamilton confirmed that this book is a fiction novel, he highlighted the fact that it is littered with autobiographical content and reference.

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Having discussed the meaning of home in a prior class, students questioned Hamilton's perspective on this concept which is a constant theme in his writing. While not giving a direct response to what his version of home is, he highlighted the dangers of identifying home as a place or territory. Food for thought considering the resurgence of extreme ideology and xenophobic discourse worldwide. The event concluded as Hamilton patiently signed copies of his book for the avid readers present.

Muireann Murphy and Patrick Henschen

The 29th Freudenstadt Symposium

This year's symposium on European Regionalism, this year entitled "*Shrapnel or Dreamland*": *how to go on after EU elections and with Brexit?* took place between 12-14 July 2019, in association with the Centre for Irish-German Studies. The location was again the beautifully located and well equipped Hotel Teuchelwald, in the Black Forest, close to the spa town of Freudenstadt. Speakers and participants came from different German *Länder*, as well as from Denmark, England, Ireland, Italy, Scotland, Wales and the UAE. They came from different backgrounds: academic, banking and finance, commentators on public and current affairs, diplomat, economists, engineering, historians, journalism, law, language teaching, national and European politics, political science and transport.

The topics addressed were equally as varied (as the speakers/participants). To take just some examples, Patrik Buchmüller set out the key economic issues with Brexit, looking particularly at the effect on trade, with a focus on financial service) – a very topical area. Stefan Büttner set out the social and other benefits we take for granted arising from EU

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membership. Frank Conlan discussed the May European Parliament elections, with an emphasis on the Irish outcome, whereas Jacob Lund looked at the European and national parliamentary elections in Denmark, in particular the “winners” and the “losers” among the parties, moving away from what had previously been key topics – migration, for example. He noted in particular the emergence of “climate change” as an important concern. Jon Worth, commentator, political activist, academic and well regarded blogger, i.a., on EU and Brexit, discussed his illuminating Brexit Diagrams; these attempt to plot what will happen with the Brexit “process”, and possible outcome. Patricia Conlan discussed some of the key legal aspects affecting Brexit – from the EU, UK and Irish perspectives. Taking a more “regional” starting point, John Osmond addressed the question of mainstreaming Welsh independence, and discussed the steps needed to address this.

As was noted by the organisers of Freudenstadt 29, the background to this year’s Symposium had been well-rehearsed. Time is running out and yet no clear end to the Brexit process is visible. This is challenging for the UK as much as it is for Europe as a whole. The view was offered that the focus needs to shift to the future, rather than being stuck in limbo without being able to address the way forward.

Patricia Conlan

State visit of Michael D. Higgins to Germany in July 2019

The President of Ireland, Michael D. Higgins, and his wife Sabina went to Germany for a 3 day visit with a very busy schedule. Destinations included Berlin, Leipzig, Frankfurt and (as always for Irish presidents) Würzburg. The visit proved the impetus to reflect on Irish-German



relations beforehand in the media, where our work featured, such as in the article “Nine decades of rich and largely stable Irish-German relations” (D. Scally, *Irish Times*, 1 July 2019): “With her research into bilateral links, Holfter has arguably done the most to bring Germany and Ireland together since Nobel laureate Heinrich Böll”. Dr Gisela Holfter was also honoured to be invited to the State dinner in Bellevue Palace by German President Frank-Walter Steinmeier. The next day featured a concert of “Other Voices”, a return invitation by Michael D. Higgins to his German counterpart – and the ideal opportunity according to the Irish Embassy to present the Irish President with a copy of *Ireland in the European Eye* (Dublin: RIA, 2019).

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90 years Irish-German diplomatic relations, part I – Berlin 18 June 2019

The first of the two part commemoration of 90 years diplomatic relations. The first event, also organised by the Centre for Irish-German Studies, took place on 18 June 2019 in Berlin in coordination with the Irish Embassy there. It was addressed by Tánaiste Simon Coveney, Irish ambassador Michael Collins and Dr Gisela Holfter, Director, Centre for Irish-German Studies. Presenters included Dr Michael Kennedy (RIA), Dr Roisin Healy



(NUIG), Dr Mervyn O'Driscoll (UCC) and Dr Joachim Fischer (UL) who focussed on the historical developments of Irish-German diplomatic relations in the European context. Afterwards the Irish ambassador to Germany, Michael Collins, launched

Ireland in the European Eye, edited by Gisela Holfter and Bettina Migge.

Book launch paperback *An Irish Sanctuary*, December 2018

Launch of the paperback version of *An Irish Sanctuary - German-speaking Refugees in Ireland 1933-1945* (Berlin/Boston: de Gruyter, appeared in November 2018) by Gisela Holfter and Horst Dickel) at the Goethe Institut in December 2018 with Hugo Hamilton, German ambassador Deike Potzel (for her wonderful

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speech see https://issuu.com/centreforirish-germanstudies/docs/2018_11_28_gru_wort_irishsanctuary) and Gisela Holfter subsequently presenting an overview of the findings of the study, followed by a very moving speech by David Lynn, who spoke about the impact the research had on him personally.

Gretchen Dutschke in Limerick



Back row: Prof. Tom Moylan, Goethe Institut director Thomas Lier, Dr Gisela Holfter; front row: Dr Joachim Fischer, Gretchen Dutschke, Dr Mariano Paz

The 12th Ralahine Centre for Utopian Studies workshop: “Realising Utopia: 1968, Then & Now”, supported by the Centre for Irish-German Studies, took place in Ormston House, Limerick on 26 May 2018, with Gretchen Dutschke as a keynote speaker.

The event marked the 50th anniversary of the high point of the student movement in Germany and elsewhere. Gretchen Dutschke spoke

memorably about her own personal experiences of the momentous years of the late 1960s as well as of her life with her late husband Rudi who died in 1979 of the long-term consequences of an assassination attempt he barely survived in 1968. Gretchen also introduced her personal memoir *1968: Worauf wir stolz sein*

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dürfen (Hamburg 2018) which has received considerable critical acclaim in Germany. She then travelled to Dublin where a reception was hosted for her by the German Ambassador in the Ambassador's residence.

Offaly History Society Lecture

On 25 March 2019, Dr Joachim Fischer gave a lecture entitled 'German travel writers on the Irish midlands, 1750 to today: A survey' to the Offaly History Society in the Offaly History Centre in Tullamore. The lecture was accompanied by numerous slides and was very well attended. It continued the Centre of Irish-German Studies' long-standing engagement with local history society. Dr Fischer also published an article on Tullamore's forgotten son Georg Heinrich Bacmeister, the last prime minister of the Kingdom of Hanover in *Offaly Heritage Journal* 10 (2018).

Dmitrij Kapitelman in UL in March 2019 – Limericker Literaturgespräche

It took a few attempts but in March 2019 Dmitrij Kapitelman came to UL and proved to be a great success with students and staff alike. His reading of his novel *Das Lächeln meines unsichtbaren Vaters* was well attended and followed by a lively discussion and many questions. Kapitelman's visit was supported by the DAAD writer-in-residence scheme and the Centre for Irish-German Studies.



Left to right: Joachim Fischer, Gisela Holfter, Hermann Rasche, Veronica O'Regan, Fabian Ram, Dmitrij Kapitelman, Natascha Guggi, Marieke Krajenbrink (partially hidden), Anita Barmettler, Anne Nospickel, Jean Conacher and Hanna Rumpf.

Austrian Chancellor in Ireland in July 2018



Dr Joachim Fischer and Dr Gisela Holfter were invited to a dinner at Dublin Castle in honour of Sebastian Kurz, the Austrian chancellor who came to Ireland on his first trip abroad after Austria took over the presidency of Council of the European Union, in second half of 2018.

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Radio / TV appearances

Within the past year external Centre member Fergal Lenehan, from the Friedrich-Schiller University in Jena, appeared twice on the German currents affairs programme “Alpha-Demokratie”, part of the television station “ARD Alpha”, to discuss Brexit-related issues. “ARD Alpha” is the educational channel of the German national broadcaster ARD, while the programme “Alpha-Demokratie” lasts 30 minutes, is dedicated to the intensive discussion of an item of current affairs with an experienced academic and airs just before the 8 o’clock news bulletin. On 18 September 2018 the topic was “Brexit” in general, but also dealt extensively with issue of the so-called Irish backstop. On 22 October 2019 the programme was devoted specifically to “Ireland and Brexit” and sought to provide German viewers with an overview of Brexit from an Irish perspective, with special regard to the possible consequences for the island of Ireland. Both items may be viewed online:

<https://www.br.de/mediathek/video/alpha-demokratie-18092018-brexit-av:5b6b07bb2f5c3c00181b63a9>

<https://www.br.de/mediathek/video/alpha-demokratie-22102019-irland-und-der-brexit-av:5ce56a939679d6001a9ff206>



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UPCOMING EVENTS

Book launches 7/8 November and 4/5 December in Dublin, Limerick and Galway

Ireland in the European Eye, edited by Gisela Holfter and Bettina Migge, with contributions by Centre members Mervyn O’Driscoll, Marieke Krajenbrink and Joachim Fischer, will have its Irish launch in the Goethe-Institut on 7 November by Prof Anngret Simms. Also, Irish-German Studies vol 11, *Perceptions and Perspectives – Exploring Connections between Ireland and the GDR* (Tier: WVT 2019; ed. by Gisela Holfter, Deidre Byrnes, Jean E. Conacher) will be launched as part of the annual Woman in German conference on 8 November by H.E. Deike Potzel and there will be two institutional launches on 4 and 5 December in Limerick and Galway by Professor Ian Wallace.

International Colloquium “90th Anniversary of the Establishment of Diplomatic Relations – 1929 – 2019” Part 2: On the Role of Bilateral Diplomatic Relations



As outlined above, part 1 of these festivities took place at the Irish Embassy in Berlin in June 2019 and was organised by the Centre for Irish-German Studies in collaboration with the Irish Embassy.

Time and venue: 14 November 2019, 2.30 – 6.30 pm, Appellate Court, Glucksman Library

A review of the history of Irish-German diplomatic relations and a discussion on current and future developments in bilateral diplomacy with current and former German and Irish diplomats and, furthermore, the ambassadors of Austria and Switzerland. The support of the Europe Initiative, the School of Law and the DAAD is gratefully acknowledged. Space is limited and early registration is advised. Please register here:

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<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/90th-anniversary-of-the-establishment-of-irish-german-diplomatic-relations-tickets-73429400313>

For the full programme and more information please see our website: <http://www.ulsites.ul.ie/irishgerman/upcoming-events>

Limericker Literaturgespräche



Renate Ahrens (early March 2020, time and venue tba.):

Renate Ahrens has become a very prolific and versatile German writer (see <https://www.renate-ahrens.de/biography/>). Having lived in Dublin for over 25 years she has recently returned to Hamburg. Given her long stay in Ireland it is not surprising that many of her novels contain Irish-German elements. She will be reading from her latest novel (to appear in October 2019). Reading plus workshops and discussions.

Sten Nadolny (April 2020, time and venue tba.):



Sten Nadolny (Berlin) is one of the best-known German authors since the publication of *Die Entdeckung der Langsamkeit* (1983), selected as one of the “100 must reads” of German literature in the 20th century

(<https://www.dw.com/en/sten-nadolny-the-discovery-of-slowness/a-45593700>). For a review of the English translation *The Discovery of Slowness* (Penguin, 1997) by Robert MacFarlane in the *London Review of Books* see <https://www.lrb.co.uk/v25/n24/robert-macfarlane/read-it-on-the-autobahn>. Nadolny will read from his latest novel, *Das Glück des Zauberers*, which shows that he still manages to enchant reviewers and readers alike (see

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<https://www.piper.de/buecher/das-glueck-des-zauberers-isbn-978-3-492-05835-3> for a selection of reviews). Supported by the Goethe-Institut Dublin.

Guest lectures



Derek Scally – Reporting from Germany (Spring 2020, date to be confirmed):

Derek Scally, the long-time *Irish Times* Berlin correspondent, will give a lecture on the challenges journalists face today and his experiences of reporting from Germany for more than a decade. He will speak to both language students and journalism students about his times in Berlin and the importance of language learning.



Liam Ryan – CEO of SAP Ireland (Galway) (March/April 2020, date tba):

Liam Ryan is Labs Ireland managing director and winner of Great Places to Work's Most Trusted Leader of 2016. SAP was founded in Germany in 1972 and came to Ireland over 20 years ago. It has offices in Dublin and Galway and employs close to 1,700 people across 41 lines of business.



Ralf Lissek – Head of the Irish-German Chamber of Commerce (Dublin) (March/April 2020, date tba):

Ralf Lissek has been CEO of the German-Irish Chamber of Industry and Commerce for many years. Founded in 1980 in order to promote bilateral trade and investment between Germany and Ireland, the German-Irish Chamber of Industry and

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Commerce has become an Organisation whose 350 member companies from various industries benefit from the services and network.



Dr Claire O'Reilly (UCC) – “*Irish-German Encounters*” (Spring 2020, date tba):

Dr Claire O'Reilly was the first PhD student in Irish-German Studies at UL and has been lecturing in the German Department in UCC since 2005. She was Assistant Professor (*Juniorprofessur*) in Intercultural Training and International Relations at Chemnitz University of Technology from 2002 to 2005. She is co-editor with Veronica O'Regan (UL) of *Ireland and the Irish in Germany - Reception and Perception* published by Nomos (2014).



Sonya Permiakova (Centre for British Studies, HU Berlin) – “*War Poetry by British and Irish Women*” (Late April 2020, date tba):

(Centre for British Studies, HU Berlin), part of CBS & CIGS “Encounters and Exchange” Initiative

Sonya Permiakova is a lecturer at the Centre for British Studies at the Humboldt-Universität Berlin. She will present aspects of her PhD project on war poetry. The lecture will be of interest to anyone working on English and Irish literature and history.

Call for papers

A current call for papers is open: “*Lives and Legacies: Lesser-known Figures in Irish-German Relations*” will be held on **March**

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12-13, 2020 at the Department of German, National University of Ireland, Cork. This symposium aims to remember lesser well-known biographies who were important in shaping Irish-German relations, not only within the wider public, but in academia, and hopes to tell their stories and unpack their legacies. Varied disciplinary foci and perspectives are welcome, as are papers presenting work-in-progress. Abstracts should be sent, together with a short bio, to Dr Claire O'Reilly, Department of German, University College Cork, T12 YN60, Ireland / email: claire.oreilly@ucc.ie by **29 November 2019**.

HERMANN RASCHE: REFLECTING ON ALMOST 50 YEARS IN IRELAND



*Verstreute Reminiszenzen / Frühe
Erinnerungen eines Germanisten –
Scattered Reminiscences / Early
Memories of a Germanist*

Hermann Rasche taught at the National University of Galway for many years and had a decisive influence on the German Department. The former Senior Lecturer in German literature and language came to Galway in 1970 and inspired his students with his very own approaches in introducing German literature and culture to them. Beside his teaching experiences, Rasche's time at Galway was accompanied by conferences, exchanges of students and associates and remarkable visits by

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academic and intellectual personalities. In his article, he vividly remembers his lectures and students and he shares anecdotes of colleagues and well-known visitors.

Der Head of the German Department am damaligen UCG (heute NUI Galway), Prof. Tim Casey, hatte Beziehungen zu seinem Amerikanistik-Kollegen an meiner deutschen Alma Mater, der Universität in Freiburg. Dadurch kam ich 1970, zuerst als Lektor, nach Galway. Primäre Aufgabe für mich als deutscher Muttersprachler war natürlich die Sprachvermittlung in all ihren Facetten, aber ich wurde auch von Anfang an ermuntert, Literatur- und allgemeine Kulturkurse zu geben.

Ich fand fast paradiesische Verhältnisse vor: Im sog. BA-Hons.-Kurs unterrichtete ich eine Klasse von vier (!) StudentInnen in moderner Lyrik. Da immer schon ein Anhänger experimentell-fortschrittlicher Pädagogik, schlug ich an den sonnigen Tagen des Sommersemesters vor, das Seminar in einem Ruderboot auf dem nahe gelegenen Corrib abzuhalten. Tim Casey allerdings war nicht übermäßig begeistert, als er uns auf dem Fluss treibend zufällig entdeckte. Aber ich versuchte ihn zu beruhigen, dass es in freier Natur manchmal angenehmer und sogar angemessener sei, Rilke (“...des Wassers Heiterkeit und Herkunft / in mich nehmend durch die Handgelenke”), Hofmannsthal und Trakl zu lesen. Die exzellenten BA-Ergebnisse aller vier versöhnten ihn dann nachträglich. In einem Parallelseminar lasen wir auch Paul Celan. Ich kann mich an eine eigenartige Szene erinnern: Wir beschäftigten uns gerade mit dessen bekannter “Todesfuge”, als unvermittelt eine deutsche Kollegin aus dem Sprachlabor in den Unterrichtsraum kam und sagte, sie habe gerade erfahren, dass Celan sich in Paris in der Seine ertränkt habe.

Deutsch konnte zwar rein quantitativ Französisch nicht das Wasser reichen, dafür besaßen wir aber einen, zumindest so gefühlten, “Elite-Bonus”. Unter den Studenten gab es immer wieder junge Dominikaner und Franziskaner (Letztere in Sandalen, unbestrumpft, auch im Winter), wie auch Armee-Kadetten, in ihren Khaki Uniformen, mit blank geputzten braunen Lederschuhen; die

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bekamen schon einen gewissen Sold, fuhren Auto und fanden bei der Studentinnenwelt großen Anklang. Auch eine angehende junge Novizin aus Co.Cork, sehr aufgeweckt und sprachbegabt, hatte Deutsch als zweite Fremdsprache belegt. Wir schlugen sie als beste Kandidatin für ein DAAD-Jahresstipendium vor. Das Mutterhaus in Cork war davon nicht so angetan (“a whole year away from us”), gab dann aber grünes Licht, zumal ich eine Unterkunft im “Schutzraum” des katholischen St.Lioba-Kollegs in Freiburg, wo sie studieren würde, arrangieren konnte. Die Bedenken der irischen Mother Superior waren aber in der Rückschau durchaus berechtigt, denn kurz nach Weihnachten bekam ich einen netten, auf Deutsch geschriebenen Brief plus zwei Fotos: “Lieber Hermann”, hieß es da (StudentInnen und zumindest die jüngeren Lehrenden duzten sich generell untereinander), “Freiburg ist toll, die Uni gefällt mir prima. Auf dem zweiten Photo siehst Du meinen Freund, er heißt Lothar und kommt aus Pforzheim”. Nie wieder durfte sich eine angehende Nonne in unserem Department einschreiben!

In der Textauswahl hatte ich ziemlich freie Hand. Der Kanon war durchaus anspruchsvoll. Ich habe z.B. in den frühen Jahren, als DAAD-Lektor, später dann als tenured lecturer noch Literatur des Mittelalters gelehrt (Hartmann v.d. Aue, Walter v.d. Vogelweide; einen Essay bekam ich zurück, leicht frustriert, wo der Referent sich über das “Nig(!)elungenlied” ausließ). Die Erwähnung Heinrich von Kleists z.B. sollte eigentlich in keiner Überblicksvorlesung über deutsche Literatur fehlen. Ich referierte über die Novellen, u.a. über “Die Marquise von O ...”, wo bekanntlich eine unerklärbare Schwangerschaft das zentrale Motiv bildet. Einem Elternteil war dieser “Umstand” offensichtlich zu viel. Ich wurde zur Dekanin gerufen, die Mutter einer Studentin habe sich beschwert, dass “this young German lecturer was reading highly questionable literature with the students” (Originalformulierung, an die ich mich erinnere). Aber Professor Margaret Heavy, unsere damalige Dekanin, die selbst in Deutschland studiert hatte, ließ die Sache wohlwollend einfach auf

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sich beruhen und schenkte mir einen Sonderdruck ihres gerade publizierten Aufsatzes.

Die Zeiten konnten schon bisweilen arg restriktiv sein. In den “Rules for Students”, auf die auch ich die Student*innen hinweisen sollte, hieß es z.B. in Section III/4: “a) Men students are strictly forbidden to visit women students in their lodgings, and women students are strictly forbidden to visit men in their lodgings or to receive visits from men other than near relatives. b) It shall be the duty of the Lady Superintendent to chaperon any picnic or excursion ...in which women-students are to take part.”

Die vielfältigen Kommunikationsmöglichkeiten, wie wir sie heute als selbstverständlich beanspruchen, waren in meinen früheren Jahren in Galway Lichtjahre entfernt. Nabelschnur nach Deutschland war die Deutsche Welle, deren Empfangsqualität jedoch stark schwanken konnte. Wir hatten *Die Zeit* bestellt, die kam bisweilen mehr als eine Woche später. *Die Welt* spendierte dem Department sogar jahrelang ein Freixemplar. Als Coup empfanden wir, dass uns bis in die 1980er Jahre das *NEUE DEUTSCHLAND* kostenlos und regelmäßig zugeschickt wurde. Das Department und die Galway-GDR Friendship Society bekamen auch Besuche von den in London akkreditierten Botschaftern der DDR.

DDR-Literatur stand auch auf dem Lehrplan (Ulrich Plenzdorf, Sarah Kirsch, Christa Wolf, Monika Maron, Günter de Bruyn und andere). Mit einem Stipendium für die Uni Rostock studierten z. B. eine spätere Kollegin im Department wie auch der zurzeit amtierende Registrar der NUI Galway.

Über die Jahre kamen veritable Größen aus dem Literatur- und Kulturbetrieb offensichtlich gern in die (fast) westlichste Universität Europas, häufig unterstützt vom Goethe-Institut oder den Botschaften Deutschlands, Österreichs oder der Schweiz. So war z.B. der spätere Großkritiker Marcel Reich-Ranicki, als er noch nicht den Bekanntheitsgrad hatte wie in späteren Jahren, bei uns, entschuldigte sich zuvor, er habe sein Manuskript im Hotel liegengelassen (als ob er jemals ein MS benötigte!) und sprach dann

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gute eineinhalb Stunden zu den StudentInnen über Heinrich Böll, die Gruppe 47, Tendenzen der gegenwärtigen Literatur in West-Deutschland, wobei sein schon damaliges Lieblingssujet Errrrrotik in der Literaturrerrr auch vor jungen irischen StudentInnen keineswegs zu kurz kam.

F.J. Raddatz, Kritiker und eine Zeit lang Feuilletonchef der *ZEIT* hielt einen Vortrag über DDR-Literatur. Ihm ging der wohl nicht unberechtigte Ruf eines intellektuell brillanten, hingegen auch eitlen, scharfzüngigen Journalisten und Schriftstellers voraus. Aber in Galway fühlte er sich recht wohl und genoss einen Abend bei Guinness und unter StudentInnen in der populären Crane Bar. Über die Jahre kamen viele Schriftsteller und Schriftstellerinnen nach Galway, unter ihnen Wolfgang Hildesheimer, der gleichzeitig an einer ausführlichen Reportage über Irland für den *STERN* arbeitete. Horst Bienek, Felix Mitterer, Peter Bichsel, Erica Pedretti, Julian Schutting, Jürg Amann, um nur einige zu nennen.

Walter Kempowski sollte auch kommen, sagte aber wegen Unpässlichkeit ab. Heinrich Böll hat nie in Irland eine öffentliche Lesung aus seinen Werken gegeben. Wir hatten ihn auch angeschrieben, einem Gespräch bei den lokalen Samaritanen hatte er sogar grundsätzlich zugesagt, daraus ist dann leider nichts geworden.

Wir waren mit Lektoren, zeitweilig aus allen drei deutschsprachigen Ländern, jahrelang gut ausgestattet. Viele von ihnen halten bis heute Kontakt mit dem Department. Unvergesslich ist Günter: er kam aus der Steiermark und verkündete uns schon nach wenigen Wochen, er suche eine irische Frau. Das klappte auch, und als er nach Ablauf seiner Tätigkeit zurückging, hatte er eine seiner Studentinnen im Schlepptau. Einige Jahre später kamen sie wieder mal zu Besuch vorbei, Günter, etwas korpulenter geworden, im Loden und mit Jägerhut, Orla (so hieß seine damals Erkorene) im Kärntner Trachtenlook, begrüßte uns mit einem kräftigen "Servus", ihre beiden Kinder hatten sie mit österreichisch-irischen Doppelnamen ausgestattet: Aisling-Therese und Aengus-Conrad – und riefen sie auch so!

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Die Extern Examiners wechselten in der Regel alle drei Jahre. Wir versuchten sie immer positiv (ein)zustimmen und luden sie vor den Abschlussbesprechungen in ein beliebtes Fischlokal (“chowder, plenty of smoked salmon, washed down with one, two Irish coffees”). Meistens zeigte diese “Investition” auch gute Resultate; ein Prüfer teilte uns sogar mit, wir benoteten unsere StudentInnen zu niedrig und zu streng und nutzten deswegen den zur Verfügung stehenden Spielraum z.B. für mehr first class honours Abschlüsse nicht genügend aus und benachteiligten dadurch unsere StudentInnen im Wettbewerb um Berufsmöglichkeiten und bei Bewerbungen.

1986 war die Uni Galway Gastgeber der alljährlichen Konferenz der GermanistInnen in Großbritannien und Irland (heute: AGS). Ehrengast war der Lyriker, Essayist, Literaturkritiker und Übersetzer Michael Hamburger. W.G. Sebald war, so meine Erinnerung, auch einer der Teilnehmer – bevor er als Schriftsteller sehr bekannt wurde (Hamburger verband eine enge Freundschaft mit Sebald). Etwa zur gleichen Zeit hatte mein Kollege Professor Eoin Bourke die sog. Galway Colloquia initiiert und organisiert, wo sich LiteraturwissenschaftlerInnen und SchriftstellerInnen aus Irland, GB und vom Kontinent trafen und – richtungsweisend – Themenbereiche aufgriffen und diskutierten, die in der damaligen mainstream Germanistik so gut wie nicht vorkamen: Vergessene deutschsprachige Autoren, Gender-Fragen, Ökologie und benachbarte Gebiete.

Ein Großteil unserer StudentInnen kam aus dem irischsprachigen Gaeltacht-Hinterland. Sie schienen aufgrund ihres bilingualen Hintergrunds an einem Sprachstudium besonders interessiert und wählten oft Deutsch als weitere kontinentale Sprache. In der Frühphase des irischen Senders TG4 (er)kannte ich jedes zweite Gesicht, sei es als Moderator, Ansagerin, Journalistin, Schauspielerin, sie alle hatten einen Degree in German vom UCG. Einige von ihnen erscheinen noch allabendlich auf dem Bildschirm – immer ein erfreuliches Wiedersehen.

Hermann Rasche

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NEW COLLABORATIONS

CBS & CIGS Initiative



Dr Sam McIntosh (HU, Berlin) gave a lecture on “The outsourcing and off-shoring of border control: state responsibility and a legal obligation to investigate deaths beyond borders” in the context of a newly developed cooperation project between the Centre for British Studies at the Humboldt-Universität Berlin, and CIGS entitled “Encounters and Exchange”. The event in October 2019 was

chaired by Prof. Tom Lodge, Dept of Politics and Public Administration. Two more colleagues from Berlin came over, Corinna Radke and Lena Nüchter. The CBS and CIGS initiative which developed out of Dr Gisela Holfter’s research fellowship there during her sabbatical in 2018/19 is set to continue with more exchanges next spring as well as publications projects.

More connections with research centres across the globe – London, Auckland, Waterloo

More collaboration is also planned between research centres with a similar outlook as the Centre for Irish-German Studies, among them German-speaking countries, among them the Centre for Anglo-German Cultural Relations at Queen Mary University, London, headed by Prof. Rüdiger Görner. Research Centre for Germanic Connections with New Zealand and the Pacific Emeritus at Auckland University, under the directorship of Professor James Bade and Dr Nicole Perry. And last but not least, links have also been established with the Waterloo Centre for German Studies and its director James Skidmore.

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PUBLICATIONS

Centre features in *Monnet* journal

The Centre for Irish-German Studies and the MA in Irish-German Studies were featured strongly in an article about the University of Limerick in the journal *MONNET - Das Europa-Magazin für Politik, Wirtschaft, Kunst und Kultur* (01/2019, pp. 42-45).

→ The article is available online: https://bahn-media.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/2019-Monnet_Web_kl.pdf

Book Publications

Sabine Egger, Catherine Foley and Margaret Mills Harper (eds): *Connections in Motion – Dance and Modernism in Irish and German Literature and Culture*, Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2019, 286 pp.

Gisela Holfter and Bettina Migge (eds): *Ireland in the European Eye*, Dublin: Royal Irish Academy 2019, 511 pp.

Gisela Holfter, Deirdre Byrnes and Jean E. Conacher (eds): *Perceptions and Perspectives – Exploring Connections between Ireland and the GDR*, Trier: WVT 2019, 226 pp. (Irish-German Studies 11)

Leesa Wheatley, *Forging Ireland – German Travel Writing from 1750-1850*, WVT: Trier 2018, 318 pp. (Irish-German Studies 10)

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