



## Centre news

December 2021 No. 24



### WELCOME TO OUR DECEMBER 2021 EDITION OF THE CENTRE FOR IRISH-GERMAN STUDIES NEWSLETTER!

Hoping this newsletter finds you all well! Since our last newsletter in May there have been ups and downs in the wider context and we are not quite where we would have liked and hoped to be now with regard to the overall health situation. However, from a Centre for Irish-German Studies perspective we cannot complain at all, we had a truly exciting time in the last half year and are happy to update you on all activities, ranging from high profile visits to receptions, readings, publications, book donations, wonderful projects such as Dännerstag and of course our 18<sup>th</sup> International Conference in Irish-German Studies. A very special moment was the visit in late October to the University of Limerick of not only the German President Frank-Walter Steinmeier but also the Irish President Michael D. Higgins.

You might have noticed that we have a new logo, in line with a more comprehensive branding strategy of the University of Limerick. However, you will find our old logo still framing the *Centre news* for a last time as a tribute to the late Dave Lilburn, the former graphic designer at the University of Limerick, who passed away in August 2021. Dave designed the logo, many conference programmes and posters for us. He was a wonderful artist and is sorely missed. Ar dheis Dé go raibh a anam dílis. May the New Year bring less heartache and more joy.

We are wishing everyone a truly merry and healthy Christmas / Gesegnete Weihnachten und einen guten Rutsch / Nollaig Shona!



Centre for Irish-German Studies  
Ionad an Léinn Gaeilge-Ghearmánaigh

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## Centre for Irish-German Studies

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## PEOPLE

We have had the pleasure of hosting Nikolaj “Niko” Bjerggaard Olesen, MA student in History at the Humboldt Universität Berlin as our intern in the autumn semester 2021. Niko has been excellent in his support of numerous projects, among them sorting the incoming book donations, the German traces project and especially the 18<sup>th</sup> Conference in Irish-German Studies. Thanks very much indeed, Niko and keep in touch!



Already in June, there was a lovely reception at the German residency in Dublin hosted by the outgoing ambassador, the wonderful Deike Potzel. She officially awarded Centre director Gisela Holfter the Bundesverdienstkreuz. It was a very joyous affair with many good friends of the Centre for Irish-German Studies who enjoyed the beautiful surroundings and garden of the residence of the German ambassador, the occasion being blessed by good weather.



*Prof Gisela Holfter and German ambassador to Ireland, H.E. Deike Potzel in June 2021*

With gratitude and sadness, we bid farewell to German ambassador H.E. Deike Potzel in July 2021.

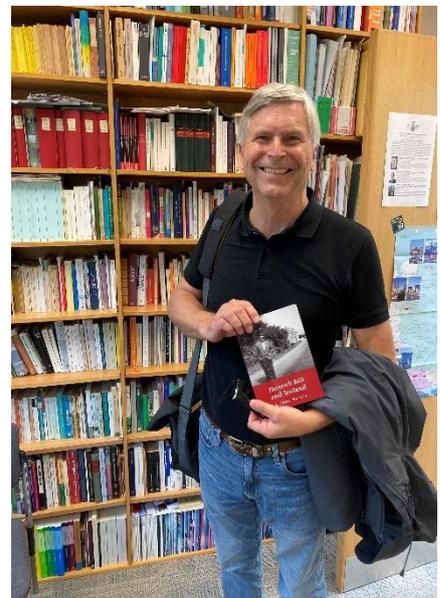
With her amazing energy, incredible commitment and warmth she redefined what an ambassador can do and she leaves a wonderful legacy. She opened

many doors, forged new connections and travelled the country, championing Irish-German connections, the German language and mutual understanding and deeper knowledge. We are greatly in her debt, wish her all the best for her further career, now inspecting and advising embassies around the world - and hope for many return visits!



Her successor, H.E. Cord Meier-Klodt was accredited in September 2021 and hit the ground running, immediately preparing and successfully managing a state visit by the German president the next month (and, we are happy to report, has been already three times to Limerick). We are greatly looking forward to working closely with him and the excellent team at the German embassy with Nancy Reck and Robert Henneberg in the next years.

We were delighted to welcome Rolf Stehle, the former director of the Goethe-Institut Dublin, for a visit back in Limerick. As he knew UL as a former DAAD Lektor here in the beginning of his career, we have had excellent links with him from the start. Together with Joachim Fischer he edited the Irish-German Studies volume no 6 on *Contemporary German-Irish Cultural Relations in a European Perspective* (2012). He came to us in September, straight after a residency in the Heinrich Böll Cottage on Achill Island which, unsurprisingly, seems to have been a most enjoyable and productive period.



Former director of the Goethe-Institut, Dublin, Rolf Stehle



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## PAST EVENTS – READINGS, CONFERENCES AND VISITS

### 30th Freudenstadt Symposium on European Regionalism

*Europe hit by Brexit and Corona: Ways to Recovery*

The 30th Freudenstadt Symposium on European Regionalism was held, virtually, on 2nd July 2021. Dr Patricia Conlan, member of CIGS, was one of the organising team. The symposium included a number of presentations of interest in the Irish-German/European context. While not an ideal replacement for the usual Friday-Sunday events held in Freudenstadt, since Prof Christopher Harvie, Professor for British and Irish Studies at Universität Tübingen, established the series, the range of topics and contributors ensured a stimulating day for the attendees. This was due in no small way to the overarching title of the series, which has allowed wide geographical and content nets to be cast, since the series commenced. 2021 was no different. There were two keynote speakers. Claire Hanna, of the SDLP, MP for South Belfast at Westminster, spoke on Brexit – among a wider range of topics. Dr Franziska Brantner of the Green Party, recently named as Staatssekretärin in the newly merged Ministerium für Wirtschaft und Klima in the ‘Ampel’ Government, spoke under the broad headline of EU stimulus for economic, environmental and social recovery, as did Moritz Neujeffski (Wissenschaftszentrum Berlin). Post-Brexit political developments in Great Britain were examined by John Osmond (Wales), Richard Wynn Jones (England) and Anthony Salomone (Scotland). Patrik Buchmueller (banking specialist), and Andrea Capussela (former head of the economics unit of Kosovo’s international supervisor) discussed ‘Finance’ under the broad heading of Next Generation EU: A new Financial Instrument. The final session was in the nature of a Roundtable on European regional, political and social developments. Dr Frank

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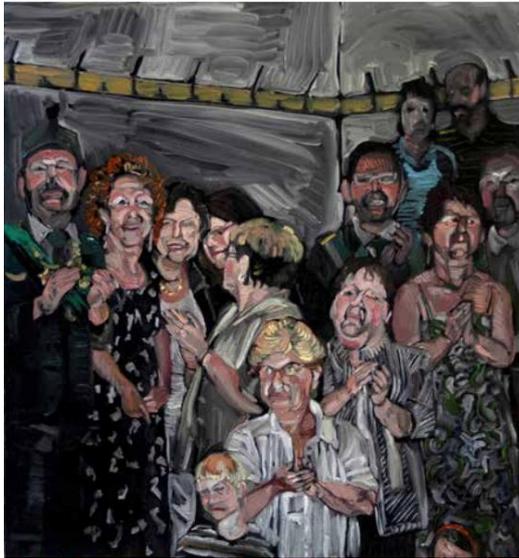
Conlan (Centre for Irish Studies, NUIG) addressed Irish Adjustments Covid, post Brexit, and Biden. Anett Ludswig (Energy Sector Specialist) spoke on Germany post Merkel from an East German perspective. Jacob Lund (former member of the Danish Parliament and Council of Europe) spoke on recent developments in Danish refugee policy. Dr Andras Vag, (Civil Activist, Budapest), gave some examples from his own involvement, on the topic of Roma Communities in Hungary. Maureen Watt, (former Minister for Mental Health in the Scottish Parliament), who retired in 2021 having served in the Scottish Parliament since 2006, drew on her wide parliamentary experience in her contribution. Her parliamentary work involved, i.a., the Rural Economy and Connectivity – an area of wide interest in Ireland. The final speaker was Wolfgang Moessinger (former German Consul General in Scotland and Ukraine and most recently Chicago). These experiences were reflected in his contribution. Apart from Dr Patricia Conlan, the Organising Committee included Prof Christopher Harvie; Patrik Buchmueller; Stefan Buettner; Frank Conlan and Christoph Meister.

### ***The Loneliness of Being German, Exhibition of German-born artists at Limerick City Gallery of Art, July – September 2021, in Retrospect***

From July to September 2021 the Limerick City Gallery of Arts (LCGA) hosted a double exhibition by German-born artists Vera Klute (<http://veraklute.net/cv.html>) and Thomas Brezing (<http://thomasbrezing.weebly.com/>).

The exhibition was launched on 8 July at the Limerick City Gallery of Art. As an introduction, there was an in-house conversation between artist Vera Klute and Prof Gisela Holfter as well as a poetry reading by the Irish poet Enda Wyley in dialogue with Thomas

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*Vera Klute's 'Horde', oil on canvas, representing the social life in her hometown.*

Brezing. The exhibition was accompanied by a publication of a fascinating essay by Cherry Smyth, providing an insight into the poetry and aesthetics of the two talented artists.

Klute's abstract landscapes look back on her childhood, idealizing the rural German landscapes while portraying the provincial life of her childhood surroundings in its *Kleinbürgerlichkeit* (petty bourgeoisness), which she escaped from. Brezing's work addresses the question of "otherness"

and the existential loneliness of living in a foreign country, suggesting that the feeling of solitude belongs, also, to the nature of the artist, which appears to be the outsider and the stranger to this world. On the other hand, Brezing's collection features abstract paintings alluding to the social issue of migrants and refugees, a subject that pertains to Ireland's past and shapes German present. The two pictures shown here are from the exhibition book with the Essay of Cherry Smyth "The Painting is Lonely", accessible from the website of LCGA ([http://www.-gallery.limerick.-ie/media/FINAL\\_LCGA\\_BrezingKlute\\_bo-ok%20for%20exhibition%20July%2020-21.pdf](http://www.-gallery.limerick.-ie/media/FINAL_LCGA_BrezingKlute_bo-ok%20for%20exhibition%20July%2020-21.pdf)). On the exhibition see the trailer of the exhibition at LCGA: <https://www.youtube.com-/watch?v=ZAjtuv-bLTYg> and the LCGA Archive: <http://www.-gallery.limerick.-ie-/LCGAExhibitions/LCGA-ExhibitionsArchive-/2021exhibitions/TheLonelinessofBeing-GermanThomasBrezingVeraKlute.html>.

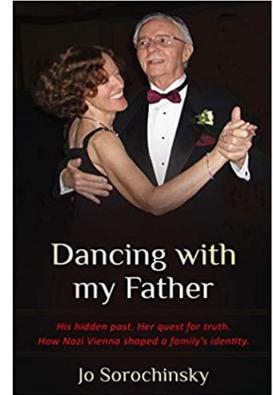
*Alberta Tagliacozzo*

**Reading by Jo Sorochinsky, 27 September 2021**

We had the great pleasure to welcome Jo Sorochinsky, an inexhaustive and inquisitive writer based in Canada, to a virtual reading of her successful and highly acclaimed book *Dancing with my Father*, with interspersed Q&A sessions.

Born and raised in Ireland and Canada, the author recognized the inconsistencies in her family's history and was confronted with her father's unwillingness to share his past of fleeing Vienna in 1939 from the Nazis after he lost both his parents in the early Holocaust. His parents, originally Jewish, had like many Viennese Jews converted to Catholicism in the hopes that it would save them from the growing anti-Semitism of the time. The Nazi concept of Jewish legacy, however, quickly extinguished such hopes. Despite a possible escape to Ireland, Ansel's father decided to stay in Austria along with his mother; a decision that proved fatal. The young Ansel's stay in Ireland had been planned as a short layover before continuing to the United States, but weeks turned into years, as he took up work, met a woman, and built a family before moving, in the end, to Canada.

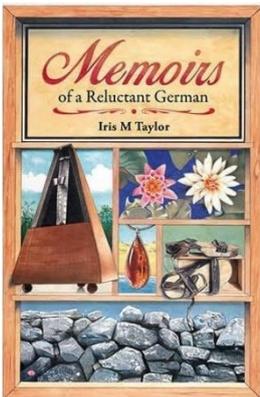
*Dancing with my Father* is not merely a story about Jewish immigration and the atrocities committed by the National Socialists. It is also to a great degree about questions of identity, heritage, the reverberations of traumatic experiences, the silence surrounding these and their consequences. Especially prevalent is the topic of belonging and the sense of home. Marking the solitary exile of her father, Ireland holds a particular place in the family's lore but at the same time carries with it a burden. As Jo explained, revisiting Ireland was always an emotional gamble for her and her family.



A video of the reading will be accessible on the Centre for German Studies website under Past events soon.

*Nikolaj Bjerggaard Olesen*

## Reading and discussion with Iris Taylor, October 2021



Iris Taylor, author of *Memoirs of a Reluctant German* (Clifden, Little Gull Publications 2020) read from her fascinating autobiographical account. She moved to Ireland in 1963, studied in Trinity College and later taught for many years in DCU. Her reading was followed by a Q&A session. The event was enjoyable for all parties involved, thanks to Iris' very engaging reading, uplifting spirit, and vivid storytelling.

Iris' story is about finding oneself in multiple cultural spaces and coming to terms with a, at times, disparate identity. Although Iris never felt comfortable in her "German skin" and although her generation was marked by a stark sense of guilt, Iris nevertheless still found herself drawn to Germany. The ambivalence of multicultural identity expressed itself in an admiration for a foregone home (for the "broad-leafed forests" of Germany) and simultaneously in a fascination of the new (the "island shores" and "Clifden Bay" of Ireland). The clashing of heritage and new beginnings seemed to Iris always at odds, and, as she fittingly put it, "maybe reconciliation is unattainable". Perhaps it is the coming together of old and new, of heritage and imminency that marks the intercultural identity. Perhaps it is precisely in the perpetual struggle of reconciliation that the identity lies, and maybe in its dialectical outcome is where Iris finds her European – maybe even world – citizenship.

*Mechthild Milewczyk and Nikolaj Bjerggaard Olesen*

## Visit by German President Frank-Walter Steinmeier and Irish President Michael D. Higgins



*Bundespräsident Frank-Walter Steinmeier with his wife, Ms. Elke Büdenbender, Prof Gisela Holfter and Prof Joachim Fischer*

A highpoint in the history of the Centre for Irish-German Studies was the State visit of German president Frank-Walter Steinmeier. It was wonderful and a great honour to meet him and the Irish President Michael D. Higgins at the University of Limerick on 29 October. After being greeted by UL president Prof Kerstin Mey the Irish and German presidents got an insight

into the many facets and the richness of the Irish-German book collection, especially the recent addition of the Gottschalk collection in the Special Collections of our Glucksman Library and other treasures there by Ken Bergin, Head of Special Collections, and Prof Gisela Holfter. This was followed by a discussion on the future of Europe and Europe's contribution to social justice in the world with students, chaired by Prof Joachim Fischer. After that, the presidents gained insights into hurling at the UL Sports complex, especially appropriate as Limerick was three times All-Ireland champion in the last four years. The Centre for Irish-German Studies was very happy and honoured to have contributed to



*The presidential couples and the Liam MacCarthy Cup*

making this visit happen and we want to pay special tribute to the German Embassy in Ireland and H.E. Cord Meier-Klodt for their outstanding engagement and endeavours and also to the Irish Embassy in Germany and H.E. Dr Nicholas O'Brien for their wonderful support in making this happen. Thanks so much!



*President Steinmeier and Ms Büdenbender practicing with hurleys*

**18<sup>th</sup> International Conference in Irish-German Studies:  
Unions, Break-ups and Special Relationships – Aspects of  
the Irish-German-UK Relationships, UL, 4-5 November 2021**



*Prof Paul Carmichael, UU; Matthias Barner, KAS, Prof Joachim Fischer, UL; Prof Gisela Holfter, UL*

Organised by Centre for Irish-German Studies (CIGS) in coordination with Faculty of Arts Humanities and Social Sciences, Ulster University, the Centre for European Studies, UL and the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung (KAS), the conference took place at the University of Limerick. It focused on the cultural, economic, and political implications of Brexit on the

relationships between Ireland, Germany and the UK. The welcome

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address included acknowledgements from Daniel Butler (Mayor of Limerick); Prof Kerstin Mey (UL President); H.E. Cord Meier-Klodt (German Ambassador to Ireland), Mr Matthias Barner (Director KAS UK & Ireland); and Prof Gisela Holfter (Director CIGS, UL).

The first session of the conference was chaired by Robert Henneberg, Cultural Attaché at the German Embassy in Dublin and focused on British-German Relations and British Studies in Germany and German Studies in the UK as well as Irish-German relations. Prof Katharina Rennhak (Wuppertal) described the representation of Irish Studies in Germany. She noted a decline in Irish Studies in Germany due to the rise in popularity of post-colonial studies. She then saluted Brexit for intensifying relations between Ireland and Germany and as an important tool to promote Irish Studies in Germany. Prof Nicola McLelland (Nottingham, president AGS) showed with the use of demonstrative graphs how fewer UK students sit secondary level German examinations than Irish students, a shocking comparison given the difference in population size. She expressed how Brexit has negatively impacted UK relations with the rest of Europe, with particular regard to modern language teaching and the closure of German Studies in several universities around the UK. Prof Pól O Dochartaigh (NUI Galway) gave insight into the dismal state of German Studies in Northern Ireland. His contribution encapsulated the downturn of German Studies in Northern Irish universities. His summation of the current situation in the North is bleak but remains hopeful that things will improve in some ways. Dr Marieke Krajenbrink (UL) focused on the representation of German Studies in the Republic of Ireland and noted a relatively meager uptake of German by secondary level students. She argued, however, that German is well represented in third level institutions in the Republic, with stable or growing student numbers.

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The speakers of the second session were introduced by chair Prof Joachim Fischer (UL) and focused on the bilateral relations of the UK and Ireland, Irish-German Studies at UL, and German-British Relations. Dr Paul Gillespie (British-Irish Studies Institute, UCD) focused on the political dimensions between the UK and Ireland, looking at power, scale and wealth that moulds the relationship, especially in times of Brexit which amounted to a huge “political shock”. The term Irish-German Studies was then further defined by the second speaker Prof Gisela Holfter. It is an interdisciplinary field of studies that evolves around all aspects of Irish-German relations; most importantly in history, language, the arts, society, geography and cultural practice, the literary connections. Dr Marius Guderjan (Centre for British Studies, Humboldt University Berlin) presented German-British political, economic, and cultural relations and expanded on the worrying effects Brexit is having on relationships such as trade between Germany and the UK or the need to find new substitutes for ERASMUS or the DAAD. Despite these consequences, Germany is intent upon maintaining a cordial relationship with the UK moving forward from Brexit.

On Friday morning, the second day set off with a session on German unification from a political and cultural perspective. Dr Patricia Conlan chaired the session. Prof Constantin Goschler (Ruhr Universität Bochum) engaged with terms that have been defining the unification process in the past and present political discourse such as “unity” and “reunification” and in particular the “take-over” or even “*Anschluss*”, as called by some critics. Prof Jürgen Pelzer’s (Occidental College Los Angeles) reflections on the *Wende* and the reunification of Germany provided an overview of the popular activism in the “peaceful revolution” of 1989/1990, focusing on political poetry in West and East Germany. His contribution

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stressed the fact that to some East Germans, reunification was perceived as a loss of individual and collective identity.

The second half of the Friday sessions, chaired by Prof Shane Kilcommins (Dean of AHSS, UL), delved more deeply into the topic of partition of countries, focusing on the challenges and opportunities of a potentially united Ireland. Prof Oran Doyle (Trinity College Dublin) provided insight into the constitutional is-



ssues involved in a unification of Ireland and Northern Ireland. He discussed the possibility of a referendum if a majority of the population favours unification, but at the same time pointed out the difficulty of assessing such a situation. Prof James McAuley (University of Huddersfield) also commented on the issue of identity. He discussed the future of Northern Ireland, focusing on the identity of the Irish, Northern Irish and British identifying populations in the country. Using various polls and surveys, he painted a picture of a deeply divided society – an immense challenge for a unification.

Prof John Coakley (Queen's University Belfast) began the final session with the demographic, attitudinal and geopolitical challenges of Brexit. In Northern Ireland in particular, leaving the European Union has led to shifts in public opinion about the union and identity. “The cost of Brexit,” Prof Coakley said, “was Northern Ireland.” Prof Mary Murphy (UCC) emphasised the difficulty of a post-Brexit transition period for Northern Ireland. Beyond the economic challenges, Prof Murphy pointed to the lack of plans for

cross-cultural and international development. This is unfortunate, as it would give Northern Ireland the opportunity to reframe the Brexit story and tell its own. On the topic of cultural exchange, Prof Joachim Fischer provided an overview of the inadequacy of education into the European Union and the benefits of multilingualism. He noted a widespread ignorance among young people about the work of the EU, political structures, and distribution of competences. For Prof Fischer, the key to changing this situation is primarily political and cultural education on European issues.

Concluding the conference was a fascinating roundtable discussion chaired by Prof Paul Carmichael (Ulster University) and featuring Prof Edward Moxon-Browne (Emeritus Professor European Studies,



*Some of the participants of the 18<sup>th</sup> International Conference in Irish-German Studies: Unions, Break-ups and Special Relationships – Aspects of the Irish-German-UK Relationships*

UL), Tony Connelly (RTE, Brussels), Prof John O'Brennan (Maynooth University), Prof Oran Doyle and Prof Katy Hayward (QUB). Afterwards, Prof Gisela Holfter thanked all contributors, the audience, collaborating institutions and colleagues, specifically Katie O'Connor of KAS, the colleagues at CIGS, MLAL and the Glucksman Library. A follow-up conference in November 2022 in Belfast will be organised by the University of Ulster. A longer report is available on the KAS website: <https://www.kas.de/en/web/grossbritannien/veranstaltungsberichte/>.

*Conference report by students of GE6021*



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## PAST LECTURES / PRESENTATIONS BY CENTRE MEMBERS

**Deirdre Byrnes**, “Seán O’Casey in the GDR Language Classroom University of Bamberg”, conference on "The Reception of British and Irish Post-WW2 Literatures in the German Democratic Republic: Tendencies in Universities, Schools, Literary Scenes, Publishing, and Censoring", University of Bamberg, 1 October 2021.

**Anna Fattori, Joachim Fischer and Gisela Holfter** (with Bettina Migge and Joanna Kosmalska) Ireland in the European Eye, IASIL, Lodz, 19-23 July 2021 [invited panel & book presentation]

**Gisela Holfter**, “Between Britain and the Continent - (Almost) 100 years of Irish-German diplomatic relations”, invited lecture by Centre for Geopolitics and part of Modern Irish History Seminar Series, University of Cambridge, 14 October 2021.

**Gisela Holfter**, “Transnational versus binational – or what do German Studies with a hyphen offer?”, Panel on Transnational German Studies in Honor of Lynne Tatlock, GSA 2021 Indianapolis, USA, 1-3 October 2021.

**Gisela Holfter**, “Safe Haven: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies and the WWII Immigrants That Helped Shape It”, DIAS lecture for Dublin Festival of History 2021, 22 September 2021 [this lecture was recorded and is accessible on DIAS YouTube channel <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ww1vSZFjFKs>]

**Fergal Lenehan**, “Western European Integration and the European Defence Community as American-dominated Fascist Neo-

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Colonialism: Elizabeth Shaw's European Caricatures for *Neues Deutschland*, 1950-53"; conference on the Reception of British and Irish Post-WW2 Literatures in the German Democratic Republic: Tendencies in Universities, Schools, Literary Scenes, Publishing, and Censoring, University of Bamberg, 1 October 2021.

**Fergal Lenehan**, part of discussion on Brexit and Northern Ireland on Alpha Demokratie on *ARD Alpha* [accessible from minute 17: <https://www.ardmediathek.de/video/alpha-nachgehakt/korallensterben-great-barrier-reef-oder-20-jahre-bundesfreiwilligendienst/ard-alpha/Y3JpZDovL2JyLmRlL3ZpZGVvL2I0Y2VhZTUwLTM2ODMtNDAxNi1hMTUxLTQzYzJmMzY4YjRjNA/>]

**Fergal Lenehan**, "Die Magdalenen-Wäschereien in Irland: Eine Einführung", part of the "Menschen und Länder" Festival, Public Library in Rudolstadt, 4 November 2021.

**Fergal Lenehan**, "Representing Ireland in British, German and French Cinema", part of the 'Ireland in the World' Public Lectures Series at the Swiss Centre of Irish Studies at the Zurich James Joyce Foundation and the University of Zürich, 17 November 2021, <https://www.uzh.ch/cmsssl/en/outreach/events/rv/2021hs/ireland.html>.

**Jérôme aan de Wiel**, "Ireland's Helping Hand to Europe, 1945-1950; Combatting Hunger from Normandy to Tirana", paper for history seminar, University of Paderborn, Germany, 15 July 2021.



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## CURRENT & NEW PROJECTS

### **An annotated bibliography of key publications in Irish-German Studies which appeared since the 1980s**

Newly available is an annotated bibliography of important publications in Irish-German Studies that were published since the 1980s. Almost fifty publications are presented here, sorted by author; their works described by colleagues, students of the MA module on Irish-German cultural relations and our intern Niko. The bibliography is a comprehensive overview of the literature pertaining to German-Irish relations going back as far as 40 years – a good place to start for student and academics wishing to explore these relationships further and gain an overview of existing scholarship. For more information see:

<https://ulsites.ul.ie/irishgerman/other-publications>

### **Pilot-Project: Unternehmen Deutsch 2021/2022**

The pilot-project “Unternehmen Deutsch” entered its second phase in August 2021. Following a successful start at school level, it now runs at third level for the first time. The project promotes cooperation between Irish universities and German businesses. The project provides students with an opportunity of hands-on experience with foreign businesses and allows them to explore another language in a work environment as part of an innovative business-specific language course. The Business German in Ireland Working Group (BuGI) have worked together closely with the Goethe-Institute in Dublin (with some input of the Centre for Irish-German Studies) in creating the educational material, under the lead of Dr Michaela Schrage-Früh (NUI Galway). It is set to be rolled out in autumn 2022.

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## Dánerstag – Launch and ongoing programme



The first Thursday in September 2021 was a special day for Irish-German studies and for interdisciplinary collaboration when the poetry project “Dánerstag” was launched in the Goethe Institut, Dublin, on Merrion

Square. Based in the Centre for Irish-German Studies, the project runs until May 2022 and is funded by the German, Austrian and Swiss Embassies and by the DAAD. The launch received financial support from Foras na Gaeilge, the all-island body for the promotion of Irish. Ulrike Gasser, Director of the Goethe Institut, welcomed the audience in the beautiful library of the institute, and reminded those present of the place that the Goethe Institut has in the cultural heart of Ireland. His Excellency Dr Thomas Nader, Austrian Ambassador to Ireland, then spoke of the many successful collaborations with the Centre for Irish-German Studies and wished the Dánerstag project well. Robert Henneberg, Cultural Attaché to the German Embassy, spoke of his interest in the project from the start, and of his love for the Irish language. In their opening remarks, project leaders Prof Gisela Holfter, Director of the Centre for Irish-German Studies in the University of Limerick, and Dr Sorcha de Brún, School of English, Irish and Communication described how “Dánerstag” was coined as the project title, referring as it does to dán (“poem” in Irish) and Donnerstag (“Thursday” in German). Both project leaders noted how the Dánerstag Poetry Project was a wonderful literary and research opportunity to explore and deepen the cultural and linguistic links between Germany and Ireland.

Among the audience were Prof Joachim Fischer, Deputy Director of the Centre for Irish-German Studies at UL and Jean Monnet Chair in European Cultural Studies; Camille von Garnier

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of the Swiss Embassy, Prof Alan Titley, scholar, author, translator and Professor Emeritus of University College Cork; Prof Eda Sagarra from Trinity College Dublin. University College Dublin was represented by Dr Siobhán Donovan, Head of German, and by Eoin McEvoy, educational technologist and translator of Johann Wolfgang von Goethe's 'Erlkönig' (which featured in October 2021). Also present was Jakob Lemme, who assists the project greatly as the video editor and who has done most of the subtitling.

The poems performed were celebratory, hopeful and yet a poignant reminder of loss, both universal and personal. Among the poems showcased at the launch were Jan Wagner's 'krähenghasele' dedicated to his friend and colleague, the poet Matthew Sweeney, and translated into English and Irish by students of the University of Limerick.



*Dr Thomas Nader, Austrian ambassador; Camille von Garnier, Swiss Embassy; Prof Holfter, UL; Dr de Brún, UL; Robert Henneberg, German Embassy; Ulrike Gasser, Goethe Institut*

Sweeney, a prolific poet who died in 2018, was a close friend of Wagner's. Together they performed a wonderful reading and discussion as guests of the Centre for Irish-German Studies in February 2018. The vagaries of the global pandemic with its note of hope were evident in Ilma Rakusa's sparkling poem 'Wir müssen tanzen', translated into English by Sue Vickerman and Gisela Holfter and into Irish by Sorcha de Brún. Semier Insayif's poem, 'Ich Dir', translated into English and Irish by Sorcha de Brún and read with verve and energy by Insayif from Vienna, held the promise of better times to come with its reference to 'wachsen/bláthú/bloom'. This contrasted with the lyrical eroticism of Paul Celan's poem of

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love and longing, ‘Corona’, translated into English by Pierre Joris and into Irish by Limerick author and translator Gabriel Rosenstock and read by Rosenstock. Perhaps it was the opening lines of Celan’s poem that best described the night and the enduring friendship between Ireland and the German language: ‘Autumn eats its leaf out of my hand: we are friends’.

The place to access the videos is the Centre for Irish-German Studies website (<https://ulsites.ul.ie/irishgerman/d%C3%A1nners-tag>). Following the presentations and videos of Jan Wagner and Paul Celan’s poems in September and Ilma Rakusa and Johann Wolfgang von Goethe’s in October 2021, we have now also presented Robert Schindel (‘In den Zügen sitzen’) and Theodor Storm (‘Die Stadt’) in November. December featured Kathrin Schmidt (‘sommerschaums ernte’) and Heinrich Heine (‘Ein Jüngling liebt ein Mädchen’ – one of the first translations of a German poem into Irish). For more information contact the project leaders: [Gisela.Holfter@ul.ie](mailto:Gisela.Holfter@ul.ie) or [Sorcha.deBrun@ul.ie](mailto:Sorcha.deBrun@ul.ie)

*Sorcha de Brún*

## **CIGS on Social Media**

Thanks to the work of our DAAD Sprachassistentin Alberta Tagliacozzo, our intern Niko and our Austrian Lektor Natascha Guggi the Centre is not only represented on Facebook but also on Twitter. Alberta is also bravely thinking about adding Instagram, so watch this space.

## **Deutsche Spuren in Irland / German Traces Project**

One of the most popular web links of the Goethe-Institut Dublin, the Deutsche Spuren/German Traces projects (see <https://www.goethe.de/ins/ie/de/kul/sup/dsi.html>) is set to be expanded and is becoming a great resource for schools and universities.

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Following a discussion with Ulrike Gasser, the director of the Goethe-Institut, the Centre for Irish-German Studies has done a lot of work collecting references and links for all “traces” to make it more appealing for further research and enable students of German or history at secondary or third level school/university projects. Contributions for this also came from our postgraduate students of the module on Irish-German cultural relations and our intern Niko.

### **DAAD Project - Promoting German Studies in Ireland - Exploring the past, enhancing the current position, and working towards 250 years of German Studies in Ireland, 2022-2024**

The Centre for Irish-German Studies, together with the German Studies Association of Ireland (GSAI) and the Business in Ireland Working Group (BuGI) were awarded project funding under the Promoting German Studies in the United Kingdom and Ireland (PGS), Funding for Round V – 2022 to 2024. Prof Gisela Holfter will be project manager and will be working together with Dr Marieke Krajenbrink (UL, GSAI co-chair 2019-21), Joseph Twist (UCD, GSAI co-chair 2020-22), other GSAI members, Dr Michaela Schrage-Früh (NUIG and deputy chair BuGI) and other interested colleagues as well as a research assistant to promote German in Ireland with a project that includes three strands.

Strand 1 ‘Exploring and learning from the past’ is a book project with contributors from all Irish universities and several Institutes of Technology, resulting in a volume provisionally entitled ‘Contributions to a History of German Studies in Ireland / Beiträge zur Geschichte der irischen Germanistik’. Strand 2 ‘Enhancing German Studies in Ireland today’ will include a needs analysis of German at third level institutions today, link up of online resources, feature seminars and workshops and provide more support for incoming colleagues and postgraduate students. Strand

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3 will be a conference in 2024, entitled ‘Working towards 250 years of German Studies in Ireland’.

## Irish-German Book Collection

There have been further donations which we have been fortunate to receive this year. Firstly, our former member Prof Anthony McElligott, the former Professor of History at UL who has moved to Berlin to enjoy his retirement (and seems to be as active as ever with projects and publications), has gifted us many books in the context of German history, particularly the Weimar Republic and the Holocaust. The collection also contains works central to German historiography such as those by Fritz Fischer, Hans-Ulrich Wehler, and Jürgen Kocka.

Secondly, Austrian ambassador Dr Thomas Nader, a longstanding friend of the Centre for Irish-German Studies, provided us with a wonderful donation which includes a myriad of prominent Austrian and German authors such as Johann Nestroy, Stefan Zweig, Kurt Tucholsky, Friedrich Schiller, Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, Heinrich Heine, and Rainer Maria Rilke. Students or colleagues will also find biographies and memoirs from people such as Karl Renner, Robert Musil or Viktor Frankl.



*Prof Kerstin Mey, UL President and H.E. Dr Thomas Nader, Austrian Ambassador*



*Dr Dan Farrelly and his wife, Una*

And last but certainly not least, Dr Dan Farrelly, longterm colleague in German at UCD and general editor of Carysfort Press, came with his wife Una to UL to present us with a set of all the wonderful books on Irish theatre, music (including Irish-German themes) and literature. We are very grateful to have received the Carysfort Collection, a wonderful addition to our book collection.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### Limericker Literaturgespräche

**Torsten Schulz**, 1/2 March 2022, will read from *Boxhagener Platz* and present the film, the event is organised together with the DAAD, the Goethe Institut (a reading there will take place on 28 February 2022), NUI Galway and Mary Immaculate College Limerick. Our DAAD Sprachassistentin Alberta will work on developing resources that will be available together with a video with his reading and hopefully an interview with Dr Christiane Schönfeld (CIGS member, Mary Immaculate College).





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**Renate Ahrens, Reading 7 March 2022**

Author Renate Ahrens, who has been a welcome guest in UL on several occasions, will read from her new novel *Schicksalsfreundin* (Knaur 2021) on Monday, 7 March 2021. We are looking forward to welcoming her back and to discuss her latest work with her and UL students focusing on German.



**2021/22 Video competition for 3<sup>rd</sup> level students on Irish-German relations – online event in February / March 2022**

The example of the excellent videos produced by this year's 4th year UL students on Irish-German relations (in German) that were showcased at the 2021 February diplomatic relations event will now serve as a blueprint for a video competition for students studying German at 3rd level institutions in Ireland. Thanks to the generosity of the German-Irish Chamber of Commerce (special thanks to Ralf Lissek for his efforts), generous prizes will be available. We already have a selection committee in place, including Dr Gillian Martin, Associate Professor in German at Trinity College Dublin, Dr Hermann Rasche (NUI Galway) and Derek Scally (Irish Times) will have the difficult task to select a short list. The winning group videos will be chosen in a virtual public event next spring and the prizes presented by the German ambassador in Dublin and the Irish ambassador in Berlin.

**IASIL 2022**

CIGS member Dr Sorcha de Brún is one of the co-organisers of next year's IASIL, taking place in UL in July 2022. The conference theme is 'Intersectional Irelands' and papers can be submitted to IASIL2022@ul.ie by January 10 2022. Sessions of relevance to Irish-

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German Studies such as a dedicated roundtable on the topic are planned.

### **25<sup>th</sup> anniversary conference in Irish-German Studies in September 2022**

Time has flown! It doesn't seem quite right that the Centre can already celebrate its 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary in September next year but that is the case. When we started with a conference in September 1997, we wouldn't have believed how it would develop. The Centre has come a long way and we have had the privilege to work with many enthusiastic colleagues and to cooperate with wonderful partners. We have seen former students becoming experts in their own right. Irish-German Studies has proven to be a very interdisciplinary and fruitful area of research and teaching and the work done has found a lot of appreciation for which we are grateful.

We want to dedicate this conference to Prof Joachim Fischer who together with Prof Gisela Holfter was the co-founder of the Centre. Hopefully we will be able to welcome many of our old and new friends at the event. As provisional dates we have 15-16 September in mind. In line with the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the University of Limerick (which opened its doors in September 1972) the conference will be entitled "Reflecting – Connecting – Transforming".

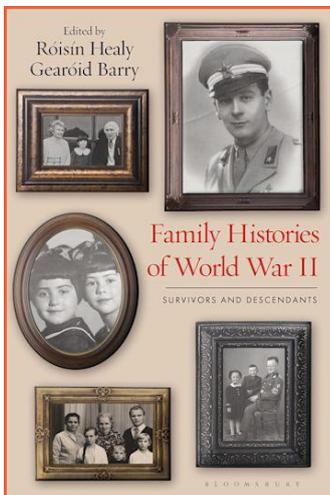
### **Researching Digital Interculturality Co-operatively (ReDICO) (November 2020 - October 2024)**

As part of the ReDICO project, where the Centre for Irish-German Studies is one partner, two of the team leaders, CIGS member Dr Fergal Lenehan (Jena) and Dr Roman Lietz (Germersheim/Mainz) will come to UL in September 2022. For more information on the project see <https://redico.eu/>.

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**PUBLICATIONS**

Joachim Fischer, “Adorno and Ardnacrusha: Fascism, Nationalism and Technology in Reinhold Zickel’s Shannon Scheme Novel Strom (1940)”. In: Clive W. Earls, Jürgen Barkhoff, Siobhán Donovan (eds), *“The Right Blend”: Mischung, Überblendung und Identität in interkulturellen Kontexten*. Festschrift in Honour of Arnd Witte (Germanistik in Ireland 16). Konstanz: Hartung-Gorre, 2021.



Róisín Healy and Gearóid Barry (eds), *Family Histories of World War II: Survivors and Descendants* (London: Bloomsbury, 2021), launched by Joachim Fischer on Wednesday, 1 December 2021. Among the contributors is CIGS member Dr Hermann Rasche, pictured here with his mother Elly.



For link to book, see <https://www.bloomsbury.com/uk/family-histories-of-world-war-ii-9781350201941/> To preview: go to [bit.ly/3wZzOdQ](https://bit.ly/3wZzOdQ)

Gisela Holfter and DAAD London, “DAAD-Bildungssystemanalyse Irland 2021, Daten & Analysen zum Hochschul- und Wissenschaftsstandort” and „Ländersachstand Irland 2021“.