Reminders from ACIS Secretary

Members and would-be members who have not yet paid 1971-72 dues should forward their checks for $4.00 to the Secretary, Robert E. Rhodes, English Department, SUNY-Cortland, Cortland, New York 13045.

Agenda items for the 1972 business meeting should be forwarded in writing to the Secretary.

Members interested in hosting the 1973 Annual Conference of ACIS should write to the Secretary for procedures and other necessary information.

The data-collecting project on ACIS members, their research interests, etc. begun by the Secretary some time ago will be continued under a new scheme; members and other interested parties are urged to cooperate.

Milwaukee: Curtin's Home Town

Jeremiah Curtin, Irish folklorist, was a native of Milwaukee, the site of the 1972 Annual Conference of ACIS. The Curtin homestead still stands on Granger Avenue near South 92 Street, at one time the heart of the Irish colony that dated from the late 1830's. Scholars investigating the Irish in America will be interested in the June 1971 issue of the Historical Messenger, available from the Society for $1.00; in addition to an article entitled "Jeremiah Curtin's Boyhood in Milwaukee County," it contains an essay on "John Gregory and Irish Immigration to Milwaukee."

MLA Forecasts Irish Interests

Growing interest in Irish Studies was reflected in the 1971 MLA program. In addition to the ACIS-sponsored Seminar on Daniel Corkery, it included a Celtic Section and Centennial Seminar on Synge; a Seminar on "Swift and His Heirs: Joyce and Beckett"; a paper in a Contemporary Literature Section on James Joyce and George Moore; and a discussion of Beckett and Albee in a Literature and Religion Seminar.

ACIS members participated prominently in Seminars and Sections, although program information for most did not reach your editor in time for announcement in the December Newsletter. Next year's Celtic Section will be on Ulysses; papers should reach Richard Finneran, Tulane University, by April 1. Proposals for the 1972 Seminar on "Swift and His Heirs" should be sent to Janet Egleson Dunleavy, The University of Wisconsin—Milwaukee. Topic and chairman for the ACIS-sponsored Seminar will be announced in the next issue of the ACIS Newsletter.

Irish Studies Section Introduced at NEMLA

Thanks to the persistence of Professor Phyllis T. Dircks of C. W. Post, the 1972 Annual Meeting of Northeast MLA (April 7-8, Skidmore College, Saratoga Springs, New York) will feature a section on "Irish Writers and Writings to 1900." This year's section will be chaired by Professor Dircks; ACIS member Professor William Dumbleton of SUNY-Albany will serve as secretary. Participants will include William Linn, Hunter College, CUNY, on "Sybils from the Big House: The Ascendancy Sensibility in Anglo-Irish Fiction from Lady Morgan to Elizabeth Bowen"; Janet Egleson Dunleavy, The University of Wisconsin—Milwaukee, on "The Nimble Genius of Samuel Lover"; and William Griffin, St. John's University, on "Ireland in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries: Views of Visitors and Observers."

Next year's program, which will be chaired by Professor Dumbleton (the secretary spot is open), will feature papers on "Irish Writers and Writings After 1900." Professor Dircks reports that thereafter the subject matter will continue to alternate between pre-1900 and post-1900 writers and writings. ACIS members are urged to provide an attendance figure at the 1972 meeting that will justify continuation of the section and to submit ideas for the 1973 meeting to Professor Dumbleton.

ACIS REPRINTS FOR 1972

Two ACIS reprints are now in press: Matthew Arnold by John Kelleher which will lead off the series in modern Irish literature, and Town and Country in Eighteenth-Century Ireland (which includes essays by Maureen Wall and J. G. Simms on the Catholic Merchants of Dublin and Connacht in the 18th Century) in the modern Irish history series. Both should reach ACIS members early in 1972.

ACHA TO NOTRE DAME

"Catholicism and Irish Identity," the featured session of the American Catholic Historical Association (Notre Dame, April 7-8) will be chaired by Msgr. John Tracey Ellis (University of San Francisco); panelists are Andrew Greeley (National Opinion Research Center, Chicago), Emmet Larkin (Chicago), and L. J. McCaffrey (Loyola).

LANDRETH BOOK REPRINTED

When Mr. John Cudahy was Ambassador to Ireland in 1938 he insisted that all new arrivals at the Embassy in Dublin read Helen Landreth's Dear Dark Head: An Intimate Story of Ireland at once, to help them understand the Irish. When the book first came out it was recommended by the Irish Ministry in Washington, replacing the four or five titles previously recommended. Long out of print, Miss Landreth's book soon will be brought out in hard cover edition by Kraus Reprints, 16 East 46th St., New York.
REPRINTS IN IRISH STUDIES
Four titles listed by W. B. Yeats among his "46 best Irish books" have been reprinted by the Lannan Foundation, 500 Fifth Avenue, New York, New York 10017. These are: "Hans O'Grady's" (1913-1915) "The Myth of the Middle Ages"; "H. W. J. Hassall's" (1906) "The Mysteries and Mythologies of Ireland"; and "E. J. Molyneaux's" (1904-1909) "The History of Ireland in the Age of the Round Table".

CURRENT BOOKS: ADDENDA
Omitted from December ACIS Newsletter were following titles in literary criticism by authors who have recently died: "The Age of Protestantism" by Nicholas F. O'Hagan (2001); "The Age of the Enlightenment" by E. D. H. Jones (2001); and "The Age of Romanticism" by J. D. F. H. Jones (2001).

Helen Mulvey, a key figure in Irish literary studies, has recently passed away. Her contributions to the field of Irish literature and culture were significant and will be deeply missed.

ACIS members who wish to review books or special issues of journals should write to the Editor, stating specific areas of academic interest.

The formidable listing of studies (118) under the main topic "Ecclesiastical History" (pp. 61-80) reflects the close attention that this field is now receiving. For the last forty years as does as the main topic heading "Archaeology" (pp. 104-110)

The compiler also has thoughtfully pointed out fields of Irish medieval history that are awaiting ploughing and tilling: "(There is the comprehensive, current, and administrative history" (p. 56). And, "There is no comprehen-

The new edition of "Ancestral Names of Places" (1869-1913) is described accurately: "The work predates the disciplined subject of the study, and many of the explanations are not backed up by research. This text has been refuted by examination of documentary evidence for earlier dates" (p. 25).

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Thomas' 1938 combined review of Beckett's Murphy and Williams' Life Along the Passaic River not only puts the work of a new ennobled writer in the context of his unim-

The forum for the research, discussion, and occasional anniversary. One wonders, for example, why de Burca could spare only a page for The Hostage, while he feels compelled to devote half a page to Beckett's Revised Play as a part in the drama. This book of de Burca gives us a series of more or less related stories about Brendan and his family; he frequently switches from one story to another, often in the middle of a paragraph and usually without warning. But Seamus de Burca is a good spinner of tales, and eventually the reader accrets the odd construction into a sequence of tales down to enjoy a fascinating collection of memorabilia.

The high points of the book are the description of Brendan's last years and the discussion of his disciples and their roots of which lie in Behan's experiences in Montizzy. De Burca's most obvious qualification for writing the memoir is the fact that he understood the complex of ideas and emotions that made up Brendan Behan's character; at his best he infuses his narrative with empathy and devotion. The book is over-


This provocative collection would have been even better if more than four of the fourteen essays had explored Hayman's opening assertion that Beckett's works have become a "purist as a representative of the... Anglo-Irish" psyche, speaking out of a richer sense of "Irishness." (If all or any of the university critics' academic hieirarchies were as succinct as Dylan Thomas' journalistical foresight.

Marilyn Gold's Rise State University of New York at Binghamton


If Brendan Behan would have approved of anything written about him, Seamus de Burca's Brendan Behan: A Memoir, is probably his best book. As proof of this, his book would not have been included in the approved list. Seamus de Burca is the Irish pseudonym of Jimmy Bourke, Brendan Behan's cousin, and his book demonstrates an extraordinary talent for writing. The Behan depicted here is the familiar romance—too much given to drink, staunchly nationalistic, vulgar but endearing, and with a stubborn streak that gives him an undeniable quality. The book is a collection of anecdotes and background information. The discussions of Brendan's plays and his problems in getting them produced in Dublin is a good starting point. If one beholds Behan today, he is himself a playwright of some note; his recollections of the early plays, The Landlady and Gretna Green, will be valuable for any study of the life of a theater impresario.

For those who enjoy reading one Irishman's recollections of another Irishman, the book is lively and entertaining. Others

very likely will find the selection of materials arbitrary, some-

thing lacking, and occasionally annoying. One wonders, for example, why de Burca could spare only a page for The Hostage, while he feels compelled to devote half a page to Beckett's Revised Play as a part in the drama. This book of de Burca gives us a series of more or less related stories about Brendan and his family; he frequently switches from one story to another, often in the middle of a paragraph and usually without warning. But Seamus de Burca is a good spinner of tales, and eventually the reader accrets the odd construction into a sequence of tales down to enjoy a fascinating collection of memorabilia.

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Patrick A. McCarthy The University of Wisconsin—Milwaukee

Irish University Review, Vol. 1, no. 1 (Fall 1970) and Vol. 1, no. 2 (Spring 1971).

In this transformation of The University Review, the editor, Maurice Harmon, seems affected by all possible forces. Fair or not, he receives all criticism unless the role of the very impresario of The Irish Literary Review. If the new form of The University Review is not writing in the same, but it is nevertheless a valuable addition to the expanding literature on the already legendary life of one of the giants of the Irish stage.

Since some Irish writers from the time of Yeats will still live and more writers are being born in Ireland every day, notice must obviously be made of the living body of Irish literature. Vol. 1, no. 1, contains one of John Montague's best recent poems, "The Leaping Line"; a nostalgic comment in the style of the thirties by Sean O'Fiaich, "A Story, and a Comment"; and "A Young Christian Pagan," a parody of "source" by Austin Clarke, "The Impurista: A Play in One Act." The second issue has only Seamus Deane's "Poets' Private Life." The third issue of "Irish Literature" was more than a confusedly varied section. Absence of works by Kinsella, Plunkett, and McGahern must be regretted.

Each issue has paid attention to contemporary politics. In the first appeared Conor Cruise O'Brien's putting public lecture at New York University, "What Extermination?" This expectedly facile summary of his liberal political experience (with some major digressions on the trouble with America) contains as well Cruise O'Brien's announcement that he will not stay in the presidential election and that he will not in his speech address himself to the troubles in Ireland. The second issue contains a different kind of political speech: the chairman of the "Irish Literature" to the International Association for the Study of Anglo-Irish Literature.

Continued on p. 4
The first issue contains articles by Thomas Planagan, William Murphy, Phillip Marcus, and Thomas Hachey, certainly names familiar to all of us. Eoin MacWhite, Irish Ambassador to the Netherlands, however, has the most provocative contribution: "A Russian Pamphlet on Ireland by Count Markievicz," which suggests a better understanding of the gun-carrying Countess. The second issue also has familiar names: Donald Torchiana, Gilbert Cahill, and John Kelleher. The last of these in a modestly titled article, "Identifying the Irish Printed sources for Finnegan's Wake," questions the sacrilegious—artistic viability of the Wake. More scholars willing to voice the unconventional would improve the profession and enliven our reading, if they have John Kelleher's information, understanding, and tenacity. Donal McCartney in "James Anthony Froude and Ireland: A Historical Controversy of the Nineteenth Century" continues in the way of Larkin, Cahill, McCaffrey, to mention a few of the ACIS historians, to convince those of us in literature that Irish history can be written about, if not spoken about, with brevity and vitality.

Frank L. Kersnowski
Trinity University


Considering the high critical esteem in which modern Irish drama is held in this country, to say nothing of the size of our Irish-American population, it is surprising how few Irish plays we see on our stage. Outside of the small canon of popular favorites by Synge and O'Casey, and the rather special cases of Shaw and Beckett, the stage histories are brief, indeed, and many writers of quality are totally ignored by our theatres. This neglect seems particularly surprising in the case of Denis Johnston, in view of his long residence in the United States at Smith College.

Still, it's a bit too easy to put all the blame on the provincial narrowness of our stage repertory, even though this narrowness deserves all the blame it can get. Irish plays do have a tendency to see the world in terms of nothing but the "troubles", either directly in their subject matter or indirectly as an image for the human condition. This tendency often limits their accessibility. Irish writers also have a disconcerting proclivity for approaching serious matters with a full measure pixie-like humor, and this attitude is very upsetting to our Puritan/"business is business" mentality. I rather imagine that these factors will help limit the interest here in The Golden Cuckoo, despite its basic attractiveness.

The play is a pleasant, rather casually written fable about a free-lance obituary writer named Alphonus Maria Liguori Dotheright, B. A. (pronounced Duthery) who sets out on a campaign to obtain payment for an assignment done for the local newspaper. (The paper refused payment because the subject turned out to be still alive.) His campaign soon becomes a crusade for justice for the little man, moves into a one-man rebellion under the guidance of "voices" and ends with the old man embracing life in an insane asylum in preference to a return to the hypocritical world of "reality." The play gets a bit preachy every now and then, but it usually pulls itself back in time with a wry grin and avoids lecturing. Some of Johnston's humor is a bit cute or literary, but on the whole it is appealing. I particularly enjoyed Mr. Boddy, the chemical manure magnate who is falsely reported dead and then conveniently makes the report come true. (As the C. I. D. man observes, "There's rather more in this than Chemical Manure. . .") The gallery of Irish Commedia figures surrounding the hero is not strikingly original, but it is deftly drawn with an agreeably light touch. The play ends with a delightfully ironic miracle involving a fowl of uncertain sex.

The Golden Cuckoo is hardly a major work, but it has a good measure of charm and wisdom, and it probably hasn't a prayer of finding much of a place in our theatre.

Corliss Philibbaum
The University of Wisconsin—Milwaukee

AMERICAN CONCERN FOR JUSTICE IN ULSTER

Members of the American Committee for Ulster Justice (Room 333, 353 West 57 Street, New York 10019), concerned that full civil rights be granted to all in Northern Ireland and that peace and stability be established, will go to Washington on January 26 to support Kennedy-Ribicoff Resolution 180 and Carey Resolution 563. In a separate effort, Professor Alfred McClung Lee's petition, signed by many ACIS members, has been sent to Stormont. A lengthy reply offers to arrange meetings between Stormont officials and signatories who visit Northern Ireland.