PLAN NOW FOR 1974-1975 MEETINGS

Chairing academic programs has become a task of coping with too little, too late or responding to the right paper at the wrong time, according to recent complaints. ACIS members who wish to participate in academic meetings are advised to submit papers well in advance of announced deadlines. Ordinarily a query is not helpful: it is difficult for a program committee to evaluate a title of a paper or an idea. (Besides, experienced members of program committees have learned to be wary of promised but unwritten papers: too often they have found themselves frantically telephoning for a substitute for a nonexistent paper three days before a scheduled conference—or worse, yet, writing the substitute themselves, for lack of an alternative!)

Note Scheduled Sessions

Programs now being planned include the 1974 MLA Seminar, "Swift and His Heirs," to be chaired by Bobby L. Smith, Department of English, Kent State University; the 1974 Celtic Language and Literature Section of MLA, to be chaired by William Heist, Department of English, Michigan State University; and the 1975 Northeast MLA Section on Irish Writers and Writing, to be chaired by Maureen O'Rourke, Department of English, Hofstra University. In addition, the Executive Committee of ACIS is now considering the topic for the 1974 ACIS-MLA Seminar in Irish Studies: offers to chair the session with an outline of topic and plans should be sent to the ACIS secretary, Janet Egleson Dunleavey, Department of English, The University of Wisconsin—Milwaukee. Members also should be thinking now of topics they would like to present or hear discussed at the 1975 ACIS meeting. (The conference site and coordinator will be selected from bids received and will be announced at the 1974 meeting.)

Other Information Requested

Members chairing sessions in Irish studies not announced here should send details immediately to the Editor for publication in the next American Committee for Irish Studies Newsletter; information from members who know of but who are not necessarily chairing other meetings also would be welcome. (Historians, social scientists, art historians, sociologists—members in all disciplines—please note!) A session need not be entirely on Irish studies for information to be relevant: opportunities to participate through a single paper on a relevant program should be noted, too.

IRISH GOVERNMENT SENDS SCHOLARS TO ACIS CONFERENCE

Johann Norstedt, coordinator of the 1974 ACIS Conference, reports that six Irish scholars will participate in the May 2-4 meeting through the generosity of the Cultural Affairs Committee of the Irish Foreign Ministry. Their travel to Virginia Polytechnic Institute in Blacksburg, Virginia will be paid in part through a travel grant. A firm commitment from four of the six invited had been received as this issue of the American Committee for Irish Studies Newsletter went to press: they are Professor Kevin Nowlan, historian, well known to television audiences throughout Ireland as well as to his students at University College Dublin, who will speak on eighteenth-century Dublin in the twentieth century; Michael Herrity, archaeologist, also of University College, Dublin, who will present a slide lecture on the work which has earned him extensive newspaper coverage during the past few years; Maurice Harmon of University College Dublin, whom all but the newest ACIS members will recognize as ACIS liaison with the Irish academic community, frequent visiting professor in twentieth-century Irish literature at American universities, and editor of the Irish University Review; and Brian Farrell, political scientist at University College, Dublin, who will participate in an interdisciplinary program on the North.

In addition to these visitors from Ireland, Hugh Kearney of the University of Edinburgh also will cross the Atlantic to present a paper to ACIS on Ireland in the nineteenth century. All sessions in the three-day program, announced as a study of "Ireland Preserved: A Reassessment of Ireland in the 1970's—Its Past, Its North, Its Republic, and Its Heritage," will include, too, substantial representation of American scholars from a variety of disciplines.

VPI Accessible by Air, Bus, Car

Professor Norstedt advises that Blacksburg, Virginia is served by the airport at Roanoke, thirty-eight miles from the VPI campus: frequent limousine service is available at a cost of $5.00 per one-way trip, which takes approximately fifty minutes. If possible, a car pool will be organized to provide ground transportation for ACIS members arriving by commercial airline: details will be announced in the next ACIS Newsletter. (If any ACIS members are accustomed to travel by private airplane, VPI will accommodate them in its own private airport.) For those who plan to drive or hitch-hike, Blacksburg is just eight miles from U.S. Route 81, the main interstate highway connecting New York, New England, and the South. It is served also by bus from Washington and Chicago.

Local costs for attending the 1974 ACIS meeting should be modest. On-campus housing will be available, and total conference fees, including banquet, are not expected to exceed $14.00, with a lower rate for graduate students if possible. Complete details concerning costs, travel arrangements, housing arrangements, and the full program will be mailed shortly to all ACIS members and will be published in the April American Committee for Irish Studies Newsletter.
reviews

Anne Gregory, Me and You: Childhood at Croft, illustrated by Joyce Denny with a prefatory note by Maurice Collins. Colin Smythe; Gravers Cross, 1976.

For over half her life Lady Gregory struggled to keep intact a home that was never legally hers. She had come to Croft Park as a bride 40 years before. Croft Estate passed to her only son Robert, and when he was killed during the First World War, the property was held in trust for his children. By the time her grandson came of age it had been sold to the Forestry Department, and the elderly tenant, a landlady no longer, had possession only in name.

But the spirit of Croft, even now that house and library are gone and only the overgrown woods and magnificently wrecked deerway remain to remind us of its former dignity, is that of Augusta Gregory. She was the who planted so many trees—first for her son, then for the croft itself: the grandeur of the past made the present more brightly; the guests she brought to Croft promised the literary future.

Her most frequent visitor, W. B. Yeats, was so immersed in the Croft tradition that he found his own tower on a piece of land five miles away. But before he died, in rough notes later to be transmuted into poetry, he wrote of Croft: "How should the world gain, if this house failed, even though a hundred little houses were the better for it; for it reposed upon the highest power, the power of a poetic tradition, giving life, giving life, and to the world the full beauty of the old and the new, from far off. How should the world be better, if the west's four shrubs and the Eagle's house be shattered?"

In his autobiography and even more in his letters Lady Gregory has described life at Croft; Sean O'Casey pays tribute in his memoirs to the western world of Lady Gregory; George Moore means her hospitable beauty with his friends. Other writers, and going on, went for long enough to immortalize the event—her close friend GBs, her son and daughter-in-law's close friend Austen John, the noncomittal John Synge and her near

neighbor and sometime collaborator, Jack Butler Yeats. Yeats’ only regret was that the formal letter of Lady Gregory’s only visitor’s books, Our Irish Theatre and Croft; but if it was any realized that or else he believed in the words for Croft. Ma and Nu, the record of her childhood at Croft by Lady Gregory’s granddaughter Anne Gregory, is a charming book, a book of memories that are both real and vivid. Gogarty’s gambling and ever-fresh essays, it is practiced daily in Dublin conversation, and it becomes almost an obsession with the artist. As usual, Mill Lilley’s "The Good-"Foster’s handwriting copybook" in her father’s collection of autographs (Joyce’s own 1904 essay, "A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man") contains a reminiscence of this generous and genial, termed a "heaven-born benefactor," who dined frugally in worn garments and whose funeral was described as "so unassuming that less than two scores followed the funeral cortege.

If such items seem trivial one may find a check-list of the Berlin books of Ulysses at The Library Library or an account of Mechanic’s Institutes in Ireland from 1825-1879. Tributes to Brinsley Mason, Forrest Redford, Padraic Colum, and J. M. Synge may be found in the Augustus John and Irish Revival. There are notes on current journals and societies as well as announcements of research projects.

The cardboard of the Border is it is a happy discovery to find such a beautiful, interesting, and well-edited journal issuing from Belfast. We may all join in wishing greater success, and, even more, for a quick end to the tradition.

Richard M. Kain
University of Notre Dame

It is a debt which every man owes to his country . . . to render permanent the fleeting products of every sphere of genius. So wrote Edward Bunting in Ancient Irish Music (1796). The quotation, used by Breathnach as epigraph to his chapter on "The Great Collectors," could well be used in describing the purpose of this work. It is a short look at the cultural history of Ireland and its music, comparing it with that of other peoples of the world, but without the superficial one. The author begins by defining Irish folk music, and covers the subject briskly in ten chapters: Irish Folk Song; The Musical Setting: Dance Music; The Dance Master; The Dance Music; Musical Instruments; Traditional Techniques and Styles; The Great Collectors of Irish Music; Historical Contexts; and The Future?

This contains a wealth of words to secondary research. The book is a bibliography.

The book is full of interesting items. For example, the O’Neills became the first to record this music on disc in a period of a slight. Two old men in Donegal sang them twenty years ago, Ballymena the last to do so: John Ireland and Scottish ballads. Breandan Breathnach and Robert W. Reese in cooperation with Irish scholars, it was photographs by James and Robert Reese. Editor: Janet Eglen Dunleavy

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American committee for Irish studies

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Editor: Janet Eglen Dunleavy

Bibliographer: Jim Ford

Editorial Assistant: Judith Feather

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vings many of them as typical of late were on the scene. Some airs associated with Irish songs are in fact Scottish—"The Wearing of the Green" and "The Shan Van Vocht." In traditional settings to the is the norm, and words are not subordinated to music.

The chapter on the great collectors describes the work of the great Brinsley Mason (1809-1879), Oliver Heaviside (c. 1800, Petrius (1855), P. W. Joyce (1873, 1909) along with credit goes judicious criticism. Bunting, for example, already published, is more than the original ones. Of special interest is the account of the contribution of Francis O’Neill, a Cork man who became Superintendent of the Waterford and New Ross Steam Navigation Company. He supervised the development of new songs and dance tunes he remembered, collected, sang, and hummed were set down by another Chicago cop, James O’Neill, and published in his Dance Music of Ireland appeared in 1903. In those days it was said that any Irishman who knew and sang Irish songs was assured of a place on the Chicago Polka Band.

Breandan Breathnach, piper, authority on Irish traditional music, published in Croft a quarter devoted to his subject, pleads that the traditional music not be allowed to die entirely. People should learn to sing it and play it—by ear, he says, "Folk Music and Dances of Ireland belongs in any library of modern Irish literature," and in a similar vein to my new interest in old folk songs because, in a word, the reason by reason of birth or affinity, interested in things Irish.

Mabel P. Worthington
California State University

This collection of twenty-one essays published to honor William York Tindall "publicly and permanently" would have been better had they been published. Both Professor Porter and Professor Brophy have written worthwhile essays, the former on P. H. Pearse, the latter on John Montagut. Of the remaining nineteen essays, however, one can hardly be included, the collection could have been more representative of "modern Irish literature," especially when one considers the obiter dictum quality of much of the Yeats—Joyce

material.

Nevertheless, certain praiseworthy essays are present in the Yeats—Joyce collection within this collection. Samuel Hynes’ "Yeats and the Poets of the Thirties," James Carins’ "Eugene O’Neill and the Catholic Church: James Joyce and Sherlock Lefants" make scholarly contributions by appropriately representing people, places, and ideas. This is not the case with essays on Yeats, Joyce, or on any particular Irish writer for that matter, or are ignored by the Irish, others falling to "Observe those images that present themselves within the cob killer material of my experience and depriving the reader of functional perspective. All of the above-mentioned essays do intelligently provide these insights into the people and their writing.

Most welcome and encouraging are the essays on those "other" Irish writers—writers whose works are, and have been, sung by the "Paddy of Ireland" (Paddy O’Sullivan) or by Joyceicos. Among the best and the brightest of these essays are Maurice Wolfsheimer’s on Frank O’Connor, which like all good essays, is not long enough; "Joyce in cracking genius continue to work a great deal. continued on page 4
but perceptive survey of Brian Moore’s novels; James Brophy’s sensitive yet disinterested study of John Montague; Sighle Kennedy’s interesting comparison of Beckett’s Murphy and Flann O’Brien’s At Swim-Two-Birds; and Kathleen McGregor’s treatment of the bilingual-satiric tradition in Austin Clarke. Tops of the lot is Rubin Rabinovitz’s “Watt From Descartes to Schopenhauer,” an analysis of Samuel Beckett’s creative use of philosophical ideas.

Although some of the essays are obviously recycled papers (regryed?), some from as far back as 1965, most do make profitable and relevant reading. Several essays tend to be embarrassingly hagiographical, confusing Ireland’s saints with its scholars and writers, but others, like Chester Anderson’s on the coprophilic in Joyce, remind us that, “Yes, Virginia, even the great Irish writers do occasionally use the bathroom.”

All in all, if I were William York Tindall and if I had my druthers, I’d druther be “publicly and permanently” by an essay written specifically for this collection than by a paper written or delivered half a dozen years ago for some other purpose.

Joseph Browne  
West Chester State College


A miniature encyclopedia, more than half of it devoted to biographical and bibliographical reference materials, this book gives us chronology and consensus. Even Rafroidi’s wit and charm cannot prevent his 381-page survey of Anglo-Irish literature from 1790 to 1850 from being a compendium of data which subsequent scholars will find useful and, above all, non-threatening, for in no way does he advance any unifying theories or clarifying interpretations.

Not that he lacks opinions. He proclaims on the first page that the term “Anglo-Irish” (anglo-irlandaise) is peridious, proceeding to use irlandaise-anglaise (“Irish-English”), and he admonishes the Irish on his next-to-last page to admit that English is their irrevocable means of expression.

But his procedure is summary and documentation. He shows that the Romantic paradox of love of the past and espousal of liberalism was particularly acute in Ireland. He shows that Romanticism with its rediscovery of nature, history, myth, and folklore revealed to the Irish the worth of the Celtic heritage and consequent tragedy of its suppression. At all times he painstakingly provides a notice of political events contemporaneous with literary production. He makes it possible for readers to deduce—or explore—cause-and-effect relationships.

His third section, on repercussions of Irish Romanticism in Western literature, perhaps because of his scrupulous avoidance of any kind of Romantic theory, does not situate Irish Romanticism within Western Romanticism, an expectation established by his title. This section does, however, by its accumulation of comparative data, indicate some areas which future scholars should explore, e.g., Poe’s debt to Mangan, Nerval’s debt to Moore.

Yet while eschewing any conjectures on theory and transnational relationships, Rafroidi is frank about his taste. He is impatient with overwriting, curiously critical of Maria Edgeworth, while on the whole, pleased by what he has read. He hopes that he has aided in the rehabilitation of this era in “Irish-English” letters. With the information that he makes accessible, someone else can now do so.

Marilyn Gaddis Rose  
State University of New York at Binghamton

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**IRISH REPRINTS ANNOUNCED**

The Lemma Publishing Corporation has announced the availability of twenty reprints of Irish classics in literature, mythology, and folklore. Ranging in price from $8.50 to $22.50, these hard-cover volumes provide access to hard-to-get titles published originally, for the most part, around the turn of the century. One 1846 title is included: Thomas D’Arcy McGee’s Gallery of Irish Writers: The Irish Writers of the Seventeenth Century. A few are reprints of editions that appeared as late as the 1930’s (e.g. Rolleston’s Myths and Legends of the Celtic Race). A complete description with prices listed is available from Lemma, 509 Fifth Avenue, New York, New York 10017. Although too expensive to serve as texts, these sturdy volumes help fill out institutional and personal library holdings and therefore are a boon to scholars engaged in related research. Most ACIS members will look forward to the day when low-cost editions of these titles will be available for class use by students as well: that is the most significant need in Irish studies today, judging from correspondence received from members.