

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 Dunleavy, 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, psychologists—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.

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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 hitchhike, 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 Nu: Childhood at Coole*, illustrated by Joyce Dennys with a prefatory note by Maurice Collis. Colin Smythe: Gerrards Cross, 1970.

For over half her life Lady Gregory struggled to keep intact a home that was never legally hers. She had come to Coole Park as a bride at 28, and was a widow before she was 40. Coole Estate passed to her only son Robert, and when he was killed during the First World War, the property was held in trust by his wife for his children. By the time her grandson came of age it had been sold to the Forestry Department, and the elderly tenant, a landlord no longer, had possession only in name.

But the spirit of Coole, even now that house and library are gone and only the overgrown woods and magnificently arched driveway remain to remind us of its former dignity, is that of Augusta Gregory. It was she who planted so many trees—first for her son, then for her grandson; her reverence for the grandeur of the past made the present burn more brightly; the guests she brought to Coole promised the literary future of Ireland.

Her most frequent visitor, W. B. Yeats, was so immersed in the Coole tradition that he found his own tower on a piece of Gregory land just five miles away. But even before then, in rough notes later to be transmuted into poetry, he wrote of Coole: "How should the world gain, if this house failed, even though a hundred little houses were the better for it; for here power has given poetry a legend, giving energy, precision, and it gave to a far people beneficial rule, and still under its roof the living intellect is sweetened by old memories of its descent from far off. How should the world be better, if the wren's nest flourish and the Eagle's house be shattered!"

In his *Autobiographies* and even more in his letters Yeats has described life at Coole; Sean O'Casey pays tribute in his memoirs to the western world of Lady Gregory; George Moore mocks her hospitality with delicious malice. Other guests came and went frequently enough not to immortalize the event—her close friend GBS, her son and daughter-in-law's close friend Augustus John, the noncommittal John Synge and her near

IRISH FILMS ANNOUNCED

Three films which have been shown by the American Embassy in Dublin and RTE are now available to scholars and organizations in the United States. Distributed by The Society for the Preservation of Historic Ireland, Inc., Route 1, Box 185, Lopez Island, Washington, 98261, the series is entitled *Monuments in Stone*.

"Megalithic Monuments of Ireland" is the first film in the series. Narrated by Professor Giovanni Costigan, with scenario and photography by Robert W. Reese in cooperation with Irish scholars, it stresses the symbolic significance of prehistoric artistic symbols and designs and the cultural continuity in stone, aesthetically and architecturally, from prehistory to the 8th century.

"The Art of the Celtic High Cross," the second film in the series, is also narrated by Professor Costigan with scenario and photography by Robert W. Reese in cooperation with Irish scholars. It stresses the cross's cultural significance to Ireland's Golden Age of art and learning and compares the Celtic high cross with other contemporary forms of art.

The third film, "Ancient Seats of Art and Learning," presents through early Christian stone monuments the development of Ireland's ecclesiastical-intellectual centers of learning in relation to the culture of Ireland and the Continent during the "Dark Ages." Narrated with scenario by Robert W. Reese in cooperation with Irish scholars, it was photographed by James and Robert Reese.

All films are in color; all may be rented or purchased outright.

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

neighbor and sometime collaborator, Jack Butler Yeats. We have the formal record of Lady Gregory's own visitors' books, *Our Irish Theatre* and *Coole*; but few if any realized that another pair of eyes were watching, waiting, and remembering.

Me and Nu, the record of her childhood at Coole by Lady Gregory's granddaughter Anne Gregory, is a charming book, entertaining and moving in the evocation of Augusta Gregory at home. It is deceptively simple in style, a world described by a child yet with an adult's awareness of that world's social and literary significance. We are invited to participate in the benign, permissive rule of Grandmamma (who, despite her Victorian primness, is far more approachable and sympathetic than Mama the artist). And we share rare moments of private emotion—Robert's old horse Sarsfield springing to life under his master's daughter; Lady Gregory's self-control over Robert's death; her pride in Richard's mechanical prowess; the country respect for the landlady of Coole. But most of all we can be grateful for this private image of Augusta Gregory at home in the warmth, tolerance, patience and above all tact with which she treated her "chicks"—once again we are reminded of how this splendid Irishwoman kept the door of wonder ajar for all eyes.

The book is charmingly illustrated (though with the occasional inaccuracy) by Joyce Dennys, with a sympathetic prefatory note by Maurice Collis.

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Irish Booklore, Vol. II, no. 1. Blackstaff Press Ltd, Belfast, Northern Ireland. 220 pp. £1.40.

Irish Booklore is, to adopt the title of a well-known eighteenth-century periodical, a "gentleman's magazine" (*pace* Women's Lib.). Its tone is suggested by the cover portrait of Fanny Kelly, a beauty in laced bodice with long ringlets of hair. A celebrated actress, she expressed interest in a play by Gerald Griffin in 1825. John Cronin's article on Griffin's London years is the longest in this issue, but *Irish Booklore* is

truly a magazine in the etymological sense of the word, a storehouse of miscellany. Here, in almost equal measure, are literary and historical essays, bibliographical items, notes and queries, and reviews. In perusing these pages one feels transported into a private library of an earlier day, one which prefigures the era of card catalogues and such post-print innovations as microcard, microfilm, and information retrieval. One can browse at will, from bookplates to cooking, from libraries and lectures to the Irish alphabet or sources for Swift's *A Modest Proposal*.

Delight in useless information is a function of an unharried life, and this recreation has perhaps persisted longer in Ireland than elsewhere. It becomes elevated into art in Gogarty's rambling and ever-fresh essays, it is practiced daily in Dublin conversation, and it becomes almost an obsession with Joyce. Readers of *Ulysses* may recall Milly Bloom's "Vere Foster's handwriting copybook" in her father's collection of souvenirs (Joyce's own 1904 essay, "A Portrait of the Artist," was transcribed in a Foster copybook). *Irish Booklore* contains a reminiscence of this generous stationer, termed "a Heaven-born benefactor," who dined frugally in worn garments and whose funeral is described as "so unattractive that less than two score followed the hearse!"

If such items seem trivial one may find a check-list of the Bradshaw Irish books at the Cambridge University Library or an account of Mechanics' Institutes in Ireland from 1825-1879. Tributes to Brinsley Macnamara, Forrest Reid, Padraic Colum, and Sir Shane Leslie reflect the sunset of the Anglo-Irish Revival. There are notes on current journals and societies as well as announcements of research projects.

In these nightmare years north of the Border it is a happy discovery to find such a beautiful, interesting, and well-edited journal issuing from Belfast. We may all join in wishing it success, and, even more, for a quick end to the tragedy of Ulster.

Richard M. Kain
University of Louisville

Folk Music and Dances of Ireland, by Breandan Breathnach, Dublin, Talbot Press, 1971. 152 pp. £1.50.

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 Breandan Breathnach as epigraph to his chapter on "The Great Collectors," could well be used in describing the purpose of his entire book. It is a short book but not a superficial one. The author begins by defining Irish folk music, and covers the subject briskly in ten chapters: Irish Folk Music; The Structure of the Music; Age and Types of Music; Dancing; The Dancing Master; The Dance Music; Musical Instruments; Traditional Techniques and Styles; The Great Collectors; Some Comments and Conclusions. Appendix I contains words and airs to three songs, including the lovely "Una Bhan," and 26 instrumental numbers for dancing. Appendix II lists selected recordings of Irish traditional music. There is a bibliography.

The book is full of interesting items. For example, the Ossianic lays were sung in Ireland over a period of a thousand years; two old men in Donegal sang them twenty years ago, probably the last to do so. English and Scottish ballads appeared late in Ireland, and gained little foothold as long as the lays were sung. "Lord Randal" and "The Cherry Tree Carol" were the first to have widespread circulation. Anglo-Irish folk songs had as their chief subjects love and disaster; there were few labor songs, and the revolutionary and patriotic

songs many think of as typical were late 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 singing the solo is the norm, and words are not subordinated to music.

The chapter on the great collectors describes the work of the Neale Brothers (1726), Bunting (1796), O'Farrell the Piper (c.1800), Petrie (1855), P. W. Joyce (1873, 1909); along with credit goes judicious criticism. Bunting, for example, altered tunes and supplied his own or others' words for the original ones. Of special interest is the account of the contribution of Francis O'Neill, a Cork man who became Superintendent of Police in Chicago in the late 19th century. The songs and dance tunes he remembered, collected, sang, and hummed were set down by another Chicago cop, James O'Neill. *The Music of Ireland*, containing 1850 pieces, 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 force.

Breandan Breathnach, piper, authority on Irish traditional music, publisher of *Ceol*, a quarterly 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 Irish material, in any music library, in the library of anyone, by reason of birth or affinity, interested in things Irish.

Mabel P. Worthington
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Raymond J. Porter and James D. Brophy, eds., *Modern Irish Literature: Essays in Honor of William York Tindall*, New York: Iona College Press, 1972, 357 pp.

This collection of twenty-one essays published to honor William York Tindall "publicly and permanently" would have been better if the editors had preached what they practiced. Both Professor Porter and Professor Brophy have written worthwhile essays, the former on P. H. Pearse, the latter on John Montague. Of the remaining nineteen essays, however, ten deal either wholly or partially with Yeats or Joyce. This gildeth too much! The reader can justifiably ask, "Yes, but what about so and so (read O'Casey, Synge, O'Flaherty, O'Faolain, etc., etc.)?" Naturally everyone couldn't be included, but 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 Carens' "Gogarty and Yeats," and Kevin Sullivan's "*The House By the Churchyard*: James Joyce and Sheridan LeFanu" make scholarly contributions by appropriately recreating people, places and events to explicate their themes. Too often experts on Yeats and Joyce, or on any particular Irish writer for that matter, ignore or are culpably ignorant of the Irish ethos, thereby failing to create "those images that yet fresh images beget" and depriving the reader of functional perspective. All of the above-mentioned essayists do intelligently provide these images and perspectives.

Most welcome and encouraging are the essays on those "other" Irish writers—writers whose works are, and have been, vaguely discernible in the penumbral regions of the Yeats or Joyce colossus. Among the best and the brightest of these essays are Maurice Wohlgeleter's on Frank O'Connor, which like all good essays, isn't long enough; John Frayne's general

Continued on page 4.



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Editorial Assistant: Judith Feather

REVIEWS, *continued from page 3.*

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 McGrory'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 (regyred?), 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 honored "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

Patrick Rafroidi. *L'Irlande et le Romantisme*. Lille: Editions universitaires, 1972. (série encyclopédie universitaire: Etudes irlandaises, 1). 784 pp., 99F95.

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 perfidious, 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

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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.

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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 which 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.

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