CORTLAND MEETING TO FOCUS ON IRISH INTERDISCIPLINARY STUDIES

Cortland, New York, is the site of the Fifteenth Annual Conference of the American Committee for Irish Studies, April 27-29, 1978. Coordinators Gilbert Cahill, Department of History, and Robert E. Rhodes, Department of English, State University College of New York at Cortland, report that the program has been completed. Four Irish scholars from three disciplines will participate through the courtesy of the Cultural Affairs Committee of Ireland's Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Other Irish scholars who hold visiting appointments in the United States during the current academic year also are expected to attend. Plans are being made now to videotape the proceedings so that academic sessions will be available on tape at cost, through university libraries, to ACIS members who wish to make use of them in their classes, and to public broadcasting stations.

Full details of the April program will be published in the February issue of the American Committee for Irish Studies Newsletter.

CALL FOR PAPERS

Youngstown State University will be the site of the Second Sean ÓCasey Festival, March 24, 1978. Papers on ÓCasey’s life and work, especially after The Plough, should be sent to Robert G. Lowery, Editor, The Sean ÓCasey Review, P.O. Box 333, Holbrook, New York 11741. Requests for conference registration information may be addressed to Barbara Brothers, Chairperson, English Department, Youngstown State University, Youngstown, Ohio 44555.

IRISH ART DAZZLES NEW YORK

“Treasures of Early Irish Art,” an extraordinary selection of priceless objects from the Republic of Ireland, was introduced to New York at the Metropolitan Museum on October 15. Beginning with the genesis of Celtic art in Ireland in the second millennium B.C., the exhibition spans 3,000 years of prehistoric, ancient, and medieval Ireland.

Among the treasures that have been drawing record crowds are the Cross of Cong, the Shrine of St. Patrick’s Bell, the Ardagh Chalice, the Tara Brooch, and the Book of Kells. The exhibit leaves the Metropolitan on January 15. Subsequently, it may be seen at the Mr. H. de Young Memorial Museum, San Francisco (February 15-May 14, 1978); Museum of Art, Carnegie Institute, Pittsburgh (June 14-September 10, 1978); Boston Museum of Fine Arts (October 10, 1978-January 8, 1979); and Philadelphia Museum of Art (February 7-May 13, 1979).

CELTIC STUDIES AT PENN

Undergraduate and graduate programs in Celtic Languages and Literature were introduced this fall at the University of Pennsylvania, under the direction of David N. Dumville. Courses in Old Irish, Medieval Welsh, and Paleography made up the first-semester program; courses in Celtic Literature in Translation, Anglo-Latin/Hiberno-Latin Texts, Insular Paleography (Latin and Vernacular) and Celtic Culture and Intellectual History have been planned for the future.

CANADIAN JOURNAL

Andrew Parkin, Editor of The Canadian Journal of Irish Studies, invites all members of ACIS to contribute to this publication, now in its third year.

Professor Parkin also wishes to correct a printer's error in the last issue, which should be numbered Vol. III, No. 1, not No. 2. Vol. III, No. 2 will appear in December.

IMPORTANT REMINDER!

Individuals and organizations not in good standing as of December 31, 1977 will be removed from the ACIS mailing list by the computer. Extra costs are incurred to restore lapsed members after that date. Please renew your ACIS membership for 1978—due December 15—now. Send check or money order to Professor Thomas Hache, ACIS Treasurer, History Department, Marquette University, Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53233. Fees remain $6.00 for individuals and organizations; $9.00 for couples; $3.00 for students and retirees.
current books of Irish interest

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Bibliography


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Civilization


irish studies newsletter

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Current Events—Northern Ireland.


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reviews


James S. Donnelly, Jr., on the history faculty at the University of Wisconsin, Madison, adds an important volume to an already outstanding series on Irish history. His well-written book, an outgrowth of a Harvard dissertation, is concerned with a revolutionary series of transformations which took place in the patterns of land holding and in the agricultural economy of Cork from 1815 to the end of the land wars in the early 1890's.

Land and agriculture were the predominant means of existence in nineteenth-century Ireland and, as such, an analysis of the changes in land occupancy and in the structure of the rural economy is central to an understanding of Irish history. Donnelly selects Cork in the hope that the experience of socio-economic changes in this county is broadly representative of the transformations which took place throughout Ireland.

Donnelly begins his study with an examination of the post-Napoleonic depression in Irish agriculture and with an analysis of the several factors which led to population growth and to land subdivision. He details the destructive effects of the middleman system, a system of occupancy which perpetuated small holdings and generally retarded investment in agricultural improvements. He shows how the middlemen were already giving way to direct occupancy under the landlord even before the famine, but it is the famine which cruelly provides the opportunity to rationalize agriculture.

While Donnelly details the horrors of the famine in Cork, he also shows how, inevitably, it led to an improvement in agricultural conditions for those who remained and survived. This study confirms recent research which suggests that post-famine recovery was rapid and substantial. The interesting chapters on agriculture and living standards, 1851-1891, demonstrate a widespread improvement in material conditions. In terms of diet, education, and money in the bank, the occupiers of the land from 1851 to 1876 were far better off than their predecessors. The famine had cut deeply into the ranks of the agricultural labourer and had left behind a prosperous class of tenant farmers.

General labor scarcity and the structure of the market accelerated, during this period, the orientation of agriculture from tillage to pasture. Landlords, too, contributed to the condition of prosperity by investing in their estates and by preventing subdivision of holdings. Donnelly agrees with recent work, such as Barbara Solow's, that rental income to landlords failed to keep pace with farm income so that, "tenant farmers, not landlords, received the lion's share of the benefits occurring from price and production increases between 1851-1876" (p. 189). The picture which emerges supports most recent work which depicts not avaricious landlords...
REVIEWS, continued from page 5

nor rack-rented tenants, but rather a general condition of prosperity which the landlords often fostered.

The onset of violence and the beginning of the end for landlordism comes with the collapse of the British market for Irish produce in the late 1870's. Donnelly views the agrarian agitation and violence of the 1880's as a direct result of a frustration of rising expectations on the part of the Irish tenant farmer. General landlord failure to modify rents in the face of agricultural depression stimulated demands for the overthrow of landlordism. The cry for owner-occupancy became intermixed with Parnell's campaign for self-government.

As a concession, Gladstone's Land Act of 1881 represented too little, too late. It did have the effect, however, of further weakening the position of the landlord. The land wars, and the land reform acts of both Liberal and Unionist Governments, hastened the decline of landlordism in Ireland. Donnelly's conclusion brings this revolution in land tenure into the twentieth century. He suggests that if peasant pro-

prietorship failed to slack the demand for self-government, neither did it lead to agricultural prosperity. The latter was dependent on a successful response to market phenomena and not on political events.

Donnelly's study is based on extensive research, especially in surviving estate records. Possibly this is why his work is so useful on questions of estate management and the role of landlord or agent. He uses other sources—newspapers, agricultural price indices, population and land statistics—with equal facility; the depth of research is as impressive as his command over the material. Further research will have to confirm if Cork can be regarded as a microcosm of the country, but Donnelly's study will serve as a model for those engaged in this work. In relating price movements to socio-economic change, and in connecting these changes to political events, Professor Donnelly has helped to illuminate the history of modern Ireland.

Paul Rempe
Carroll College

ETHNIC STUDIES CONFERENCE

“The Irish-Indian Connection: Colonial England's Reaction to Alien Peoples” is the title of a session of the Eastern Community College Social Science Association Annual Conference to be held April 14-16 in Pittsburgh. Featured will be two papers, “The Gaelic Irish as a Primitive Stereotype,” by Jerrold Casway, Howard Community College, and “Euro-Indian Cultural Experience,” by Stanley Markowitz, Essex Community College.

STUDY ABROAD PROGRAMS

Thomas Kinsella will direct a spring, 1978, semester program in Irish history, literature, and culture for American undergraduates and graduates through Trinity College, Dublin, in Association with Temple University. Further details are available from Professor Kinsella, English Department, Temple University, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19122.

Michael Scott, Dean of the School for Irish Studies, has expanded opportunities for intensive study of the Irish language, in his continuing program offering fall and spring semester study in Irish literature, language, history, folklore, archaeology, and political science for American undergraduates and graduates. Further information is available from Dean Scott, School for Irish Studies, Ballbridge, Dublin.

Both programs draw their faculty from Irish universities.

Lahinch, Co. Clare, is the site chosen by Cumann Merriman for its 1978 Summer School, scheduled for August 25-31. The theme will be “Sports and Holiday Making”: topics will include popular games and the games of the gentry, theater in Co. Clare, Clare music and dancing, and the growth of Clare watering places in the nineteenth century. Further details are available from Sean J. White, Director, Cumann Merriman, 8 Galtrim Road, Bray, Co. Wicklow.

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CELTIC CONSCIOUSNESS

St. Michael's College, University of Toronto, has set aside February 5-12, 1978, for a week-long interdisciplinary celebration of the Celtic consciousness. Opening with Sunday evening dramatizations from Celtic literature, the program features lectures on Celtic art, artifacts, myth, and music; heroic and Christian aspects of early Celtic society; the poetry and folk memory of the Celts; and the Celtic impact on the modern world. It closes on Sunday, February 12, with a Celtic Arts presentation of “The Celtic Hero: The Cuchulain Plays of W. B. Yeats.”

Robert O'Driscoll, coordinator of the event, has invited distinguished lecturers from England, Ireland, Scotland, Wales, Canada, and the United States to participate in the program. Further information is available from Professor O'Driscoll of the English Department, St. Michael's College, University of Toronto, Toronto, Ontario MSS 1J4.