

BOSTON COLLEGE

CENTER FOR IRISH PROGRAMS

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IRISH STUDIES

Burns Visiting Scholar, Spring 2018 Semester



Professor Jason Knirck

Spring 2018 sees us welcome Professor Jason Knirck as Burns Scholar. Professor Knirck has an undergraduate degree in history and math from Gonzaga University and a doctorate in European/British history from Washington State University. After teaching at Humboldt State University for three years starting in 2001, he moved to Central Washington University (CWU) in 2004 and has remained there since.

At CWU, he has worked with a number of graduate students studying various aspects of Irish and British history, including the Shannon Hydroelectric Scheme, the transnational development of yoga, the educational practices of Patrick Pearse, the commemoration of

the First World War in the Free State, and the Ulster Women's Unionist Council. He has also been, at various times, department chair and president of the faculty union. At CWU, he regularly teaches a three-quarter sequence on the history of the British Isles, in addition to a class on the Irish Revolution.

Professor Knirck has published widely on the politics of the Irish Free State and is the author of three monographs: *Women of the Dáil: Gender, Republicanism, and the Anglo-Irish Treaty* (2006); *Afterimage of the Revolution: Cumann na nGaedheal and Irish Politics 1922-32* (2014); and *Imagining Ireland's Independence: The Debates over the Anglo-Irish Treaty of 1921* (2006).

“Is there an American School of Irish History?”

While serving as Burns Scholar, Jason will work on a book-length study of opposition parties in the Free State Dáil focusing on how each party normalized the notion of a loyal opposition, a factor that had been largely absent from Irish politics prior to the establishment of the Free State. This will also be the topic of his Burns lecture. He will teach a class in Boston College's History Department on the topic “Ireland and Empire” and organize a one-day seminar that asks the question, “Is there an American School of Irish History?” The seminar will bring many of the current leading American historians of Ireland to the Chestnut Hill Campus.



Donal Ryan, photo by Anthony Woods

The John J. Burns Library of Rare Books, Special Collections, and Archives

Donal Ryan Archives Acquisition and Visit

Burns Library has recently acquired the literary archives of acclaimed fiction writer Donal Ryan, winner of the 2015 European Prize for Literature. His virtuoso debut novel, *The Spinning Heart*, was selected for the 2013 Guardian First Book Award and voted Irish Book of the Decade in 2016. A connected series of first-person narratives offering poignant glimpses into post-Celtic Tiger Ireland, it has been adapted for stage, with sold-out runs at the Smock Alley and Gaiety Theatres in Dublin and Mill Theatre, Dundalk.

Donal has published two additional novels, *The Thing About December* (2013) and *All We Shall Know* (2016), as well as a collection of short stories, *A Slanting of the Sun* (2015). His short stories have also been included in several anthologies, including *Dubliners 100* (Tramp Press, 2014) and *Winter Pages* (Curlew Editions, 2016). He has been shortlisted for the IMPAC International Literary Award and longlisted for the Man Booker and Desmond Elliott Prizes, among others, and has won three Irish Book Awards. His writings have been translated into more than 20 languages. Born in Nenagh, Co. Tipperary, he has worked for the National Employment Rights Authority and now lectures in Creative Writing at the University of Limerick.

Donal scripted the award-winning 2017 RTÉ radio drama *I Seek Refuge*, which draws listeners into the

turmoil of Syrians fleeing their war-torn homeland—an anticipation of his forthcoming novel, *From a Low and Quiet Sea*, scheduled for release by Penguin Random House in July.

We are excited to host Donal for a three-day visit in February, which will include a public reading on Thursday evening, February 22, and a tea with Creative Writing faculty and students. He will also visit James Smith's Boom, Bust, and Austerity class and have lunch with his students, who will be reading *The Spinning Heart*—which has also appeared on secondary-level English examination syllabi in Ireland.

Donal's archives include working drafts with annotations of his first four novels and short story collection. They also contain typescripts of unpublished stories and the playscript for the stage adaptation of *The Spinning Heart*. In addition, there is extensive typescript and e-mail correspondence, including queries to numerous literary agents and publishers for his early novels, as well as a selection of letters from readers. Texts of speeches and publicity files round out the archives, which will be opened for research once they have been fully processed. Please contact Burns Librarian Christian Dupont at christian.dupont@bc.edu for further information.

CLIR/Mellon Grant Received to Preserve Music Recordings

The Boston College Libraries have been awarded a \$30,775 grant to digitally reformat a selection of unique audio collections in the John J. Burns Library's Irish Music Archives. The grant is one of 16 awarded



nationally through the current round of the Recordings at Risk program, administered by the Council on Library and Information Resources with funding from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation. Entitled Sounds of Mid-20th Century Irish America: Preserving Historic Music Field Recordings for Research Access, the project focuses on two internationally known collections supporting the study of Irish traditional music. The work will involve experts from across BC Libraries, including digital library and preservation specialists and archivists, exemplifying core library values to preserve and make accessible heritage and research collections for the long term.

The two archival collections, the *James W. Smith Irish Music Recordings* and the *Joseph A. Lamont Irish Music Recordings*, include open-reel tapes of unpublished music. The 1950s/60s performances feature some of Boston and New York's most prominent Irish musicians at the time, and the informal nature and setting of the recordings—noncommercial “jam sessions” in public and private spaces—uniquely capture the time and spirit of this evolving musical genre. The material will be of high value to musicologists; performers of Irish and folk music; and scholars of Irish-American history, cultural anthropology, and folkways of immigrant communities.

The highly competitive bidding process included an “independent, full scholarly and technical review that assessed scholarly value, cost effectiveness and technical competence,” and prioritized the long-term preservation of content. The Sounds of Mid-20th Century Irish America project represents a classic case of high-value research content that would remain inaccessible without digitization and preservation. Moreover, the majority of these recordings are in their original format, and are therefore at risk of degradation and loss without digital conversion, preservation, and archiving.

The project is scheduled for completion in late 2018. All of the digitized recordings will be accessible to researchers and the public through Burns Library. An inventory will be published on the BC Libraries' website along with selections of music. For more information, please contact Irish Music Librarian Elizabeth Sweeney at elizabeth.sweeney@bc.edu.

Fall Irish Music Symposium a Success

Last September, John J. Burns Library's Irish Music Archives collaborated with the National University of Ireland Galway to bring an international symposium, *Nótaí/Notes: Music and Ireland*, to Boston College. The event drew international scholars from a variety of disciplines, reflecting the energy of music-related research happening globally.

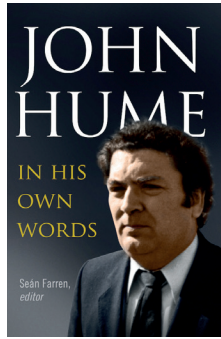
Two NUI Galway faculty members, Verena Commins and Méabh Ní Fhuartháin, envisioned a symposium at Boston College that would serve as a springboard for a special edition of *Éire-Ireland: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Irish Studies* to be published in 2019. Commins and Ní Fhuartháin worked closely with Boston College's Irish Music Librarian Elizabeth Sweeney to coordinate two days of interdisciplinary music exploration and fellowship. The *Nótaí/Notes* symposium was cosponsored by Comhrá Ceoil, Centre for Irish Studies at NUI Galway, together with the Boston College Libraries and Boston College Center for Irish Programs, with additional funding provided by the Irish Research Council New Foundations Scheme.

The symposium opened on Friday evening with a presentation by harp historian Nancy Hurrell at Burns Library, followed by a reception at which selected Irish Music Archives materials were on display. Saturday's keynote presentations in Gasson Hall included Helen O'Shea (University of Melbourne), who examined Jos Koning's study of East Clare music, and Méabh Ní Fhuartháin (NUI Galway), who discussed parish and dance halls as spaces for music and dance practice. The day's speakers also included panelists Verena Commins (NUI Galway), Aileen Dillane (University of Limerick), Adam Kaul (Augustana College), Dan Neely (New York University), Michael Nichol森 (Oakton Community College), and Thomas O'Grady (University of Massachusetts, Boston), with speaker introductions by James Smith (Boston College) and Sally K. Sommers Smith Wells (Boston University). The day concluded with a musical interlude performed by BC's Sheila Falls Keohane on fiddle and Sean Smith on guitar.

The special issue of *Éire-Ireland*, guest edited by Ní Fhuartháin and Commins, will present papers from the symposium alongside related research. Co-edited

by Vera Kreilkamp (Boston College), *Éire-Ireland* has been a leader in expanding the literary-historical axis on which Irish Studies has developed.

John Hume: His Vision and Legacy for Ireland, a Day-long Symposium



In commemoration of the 50th anniversary of the Northern Ireland Civil Rights Movement and the 20th anniversary of the historic Good Friday Agreement, the Center for Irish Programs at Boston College will host a day-long symposium on April 28 titled *John Hume: His Vision and Legacy for Ireland*.

For more than three decades, Hume played a crucial role in upholding the constitutional tradition of Irish nationalism. His persistence in advocating dialogue and engagement as a means of resolving complicated issues and differences dividing the Catholic/Nationalist community and the Protestant/Unionist community was central to shaping and advancing the peace process, from the landmark Anglo-Irish Agreement of 1985 to the historic Good Friday Agreement of 1998. Hume's intellectual analysis of relationships at the heart of the Northern Irish problem provided much of the framework that enabled Irish, Northern Irish, and British politicians and diplomats to reach agreement in 1998 and, subsequently, form the power-sharing Assembly at Stormont in 2007.

Panels will address Hume's role in the initial civil rights campaign of the late 1960s, how his three-strand analysis was applied to healing fractured relationships within Northern Ireland (between the North of Ireland and the Republic of Ireland), and between Dublin and London. One panel will explore Hume's role in marshaling Irish-American political, moral, and economic support in pursuit of peace and justice in Ireland. Panelists will include political activists and commentators from Northern Ireland as well as Bostonians who played positive, if distant, roles in advancing the Irish peace process.

The proceedings will include the American launch of *John Hume: In His Own Words*, edited by Sean Farren,

Hume's long-time colleague in the Social Democratic and Labour Party. This volume includes excerpts from Hume's speeches, articles, and essays along with contextual commentary by Sean Farren. Copies of this book as well as *John Hume: Irish Peacemaker*, a collection of essays edited by Sean Farren and Dennis Haughey, will also be available for purchase.

The event is sponsored by the Center for Irish Programs at Boston College with additional support from the Global Leadership Institute at Boston College, the Irish American Partnership, the Eire Society of Boston, and the Charitable Irish Society.



Professor Chen Li

Irish Studies in China

Professor Chen Li, Irish Studies Center at Beijing Foreign Studies University Fulbright Scholar, Boston College Irish Studies, 2017-18

Irish Studies is a budding academic field in China. Though it has been acknowledged as a distinctive field only in the past decade, it grown fast, with impressive achievements in institutional development and scholarly research.

Currently, there are Irish Studies centers at Beijing Foreign Studies University (BFSU), Nanjing University, Fudan University, Shanghai Normal University, and Shanghai University of International Business and Economics, and a British and Irish Literature Centre at Hunan Normal University, among others.

In 2007, the Irish Studies Centre at BFSU was officially established, making it the first, and so far only, multidisciplinary research institution in Irish Studies in China. Thanks to the joint efforts of several important forces—BFSU, the Irish government, NUI Maynooth, University College Dublin, University College Cork, and Trinity College Dublin—the centre has achieved rapid growth in recent years.

It now offers graduate programs and enrolls students on a biennial basis, who pursue their MA degrees either in Irish Literature and Culture or Irish Politics and Economics. One-year Irish-language teaching courses were introduced in 2010, open to both undergraduates and MA students. In March 2014, partially funded by the Irish Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, the Irish Studies centers in China jointly set up “the Irish Studies Network in China (ISNC)” to promote academic exchanges and cooperation across the country.

Furthermore, major Irish writers such as Swift, Shaw, Wilde, Yeats, Beckett, and Joyce are routinely taught in the English departments of most Chinese universities, though sometimes as English or British literature.

Yeats, Shaw, Beckett, Wilde, Joyce, Sean O’Casey, Brian Friel, Seamus Heaney, and Frank O’Connor all claim more than one translated version of their major works. Recent achievements include the translations of Joyce’s *Ulysses* and *Finnegans Wake*, and some less-read novels by Beckett. Another trend that is worth mentioning is the introduction of contemporary Irish literature to Chinese readers. Writers like William Trevor, John Banville, Sebastian Berry, Colm Tóibín, Colum McCann, Anne Enright, Martin McDonagh, and Marina Carr are well translated and well read in China. McDonagh’s plays *The Beauty Queen of Leenane* and *The Pillowman* are part of the core repertoire of several art theatres in Beijing and Shanghai.

As for research publication, Yeats, Joyce, and Beckett are the three most researched Irish writers in China. Some recent examples are Wang Yu’s *The Dramatic Narrative in Yeats’s Lyrics of the Middle Period* (2014), Shi Qingjing’s *Samuel Beckett on Chinese Stage: 1964-2011* (2015), Cao Bo’s *A Study of S. Beckett’s Novels of “Failure”* (2015) and Dai Congrong’s *Book of Freedom: A Reading of Joyce’s Finnegans Wake* (2007). However, research

interest extends beyond major writers. Chen Li’s *Rose Upon the Rood of Time: The 20th-Century Irish Big-House Novel* (2009) and *Self-Fashioning in the Irish Literary Revival* (2016), Li Chengjian’s *A Study of Contemporary Irish Drama* (2015), and Tian Ju’s *A Century’s Echo of the Irish Dramatic Movement in China* (2017) are some examples. Meanwhile, textbooks specially designed for Chinese students of Irish Studies have been compiled. Professor Chen Shu’s *An Anthology of Irish Literature* (2004) and *Irish Literature* (2000) are among the most representative works in this field.

However unlikely it appears to be, the seed of Irish Studies has grown into a robust sapling in China, ready to reach out for more cooperation and exchanges with its counterparts around the world.

Boston College-Ireland

Transitional Justice Symposium

On Friday, April 6, BC-Ireland, partnering with University College Dublin and Irish Memory Studies, will host a one-day symposium titled Transitional Justice and Memory for Post-Civil War Regions. The event brings scholars together to discuss the legacy of civil war in Ireland, the Balkans, Ukraine, Colombia, Spain, Cyprus, and Greece. The event will be recorded and made available as a podcast at a future date.

Rather than focus on one nation-state, organizers hope to make the discussion both local and transnational to think about what is distinct about cultural memory in each area and what crosses borders. These discussions are crucial, they feel, in a context where 2018 marks the end of the First World War and the beginning of multiple wars of independence and civil wars, and are particularly germane to Ireland as it moves toward the end of its “Decade of Centenaries” and the responsibility for commemorating, in 2022–23, its own civil war. The aim of the day is to try to rethink Ireland’s approach to its civil war centenaries in the context of other international experiences. Details of the event will be posted on the BC-Ireland website: <http://www.bc.edu/content/bc-web/sites/ireland.html>. All are welcome.

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Century Ireland

Century Ireland **will** continue to be supported by the Department of the Arts, Heritage, and the Gaeltacht throughout 2018. The site has now had over 1.9 million visits since it launched in May 2013.

In many ways, 2017 was a quiet year in terms of commemorations, but the rapid escalation of events in 2018 will ensure that the site and its following continue to grow. Particular events of interest from 1918 that will be highlighted in 2018 include the death of John Redmond, the end of World War One, the rise of Sinn Fein, and the General Election of that year. Also, as part of the increasing number of partnerships associated

with Century Ireland, BC-Ireland will partner with Queen's University and Edinburgh University on a project centered on the internationalization of the Irish Revolution. The research carried out by the Belfast and Edinburgh teams will lead to a greater and more nuanced understanding of how the radicalizing events of the revolutionary period in Ireland were understood elsewhere around the globe. As the research is completed, Century Ireland will highlight various aspects relative to the way in which the world responded and thoughts about the changes that took place in Ireland. Follow www.rte.ie/centuryireland or @CenturyIRL to find out more.

BOSTON COLLEGE CENTER FOR IRISH PROGRAMS

The Boston College Center for Irish Programs is headquartered in Connolly House on the University's Chestnut Hill Campus. The Center includes BC's Irish Studies Program, the Irish Institute, Boston College-Ireland on St. Stephen's Green in Dublin, and the Burns Library's Irish Collections.

In addition to providing administrative support and program coordination for each of these units, the Center also serves as an umbrella under which any Irish-related activities on each of the Boston College campuses may obtain resource assistance.

For more information, please contact: Irish Studies at Boston College, Connolly House, 300 Hammond Street, Chestnut Hill, MA 02467, 617-552-6396, or e-mail irish@bc.edu. See our website at www.bc.edu/irish. *Irish Studies* is edited by Joan Reilly.