

34th Irish Conference of Historians/4th annual QUB Centre for Public History Conference

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Conference abstracts and speaker biographies

Keynote Abstracts

Keynote 1

Professor Martin Heale, 'Lesser and Greater Monasteries in Henry VIII's England'

The lesser monasteries of early Tudor England have rarely been viewed in a positive light. Questioning their viability, their contribution to society, and the quality of their religious observance, scholars have accorded this sizeable group of religious houses only a minor role in narratives of the early English Reformation. Indeed, the large-scale dissolution of lesser monasteries between 1525 and 1537 has often been presented as a desirable and fairly uncontroversial act of religious reform, and the substantial popular protests that coincided with these suppressions attributed to vested interests and wider concerns.

This paper reassesses the place of lesser monasteries in Henry VIII's England. These heterogeneous institutions were often respectably resourced and populated, and served a variety of functions for local communities. There is also good evidence that they were generally well regarded by their lay neighbours and by local elites. If lesser monasteries were indeed popular at a local level (potentially more so than the great religious houses of the realm), then the early stages of the Dissolution take on a different complexion. The paper will therefore take a fresh look at Cardinal Wolsey's monastic reforms, the events surrounding the 1536 Act of Suppression, and the popular uprisings of that year, as well as considering the assumptions that underpin historians' traditional privileging of larger and wealthier monastic institutions.

Professor Martin Heale is Professor of Late Medieval and Reformation History at the University of Liverpool. He has published widely on the religious and social history of late medieval and early Tudor England, with a particular focus on monasteries and their interactions with the wider world. His publications include *The Abbots and Priors of Late Medieval and Reformation England* (2016) and *Monasticism in Late Medieval England, c.1300-1535* (2009). He is currently working on a range of projects connected with the dissolution of the monasteries in Henry VIII's England.

Keynote 2 / Keith Jeffery Memorial Lecture

Heather-Ann Thompson, 'American Prison Uprisings and Why They Matter Across the World'

When the people who are locked up inside of prisons or jails suddenly erupt, we, the public, are suddenly forced to notice what how our criminal justice system actually operates. These moments force us, as few others do, really to reckon with what it means to handle harm, addiction, and even violence the way that we do. They force us to question our blind faith in institutions of punishment, not just whether they are humane, but also whether they even accomplish what we are told they do—make us safer. By understanding one particular prison uprising that took place back in 1971 in the United States, the Attica prison uprising, and by getting a clearer understanding of why that country would thereafter come to lock up more people than at any other time in its history, and more than any other country on the globe, we can also make shine important new light on present day criminal justice policies in Ireland and other parts of the world.

Professor Heather Ann Thompson: Heather Ann Thompson is a historian at the University of Michigan. Her latest book, *Blood in the Water: The Attica Prison Uprising of 1971 and its Legacy*, won the Pulitzer Prize, the Bancroft Prize, and five other book awards. It was also a finalist for the National Book Award, The LA Times Book Award, and the Cunliff Book Prize. Thompson writes regularly on the history of policing, mass incarceration and the current criminal justice system for myriad scholarly and popular publications including The New York Times, The Washington Post, Time, The Atlantic, and the New Yorker. She also works in the film and television industry as an historical advisor as well as a consulting producer. Thompson's work in the policy arena includes having served on a National Academy of Sciences blue-ribbon panel that studied the causes and consequences of mass incarceration in the United States and on its standing Committee for Law and Justice, as well as serving on myriad justice policy boards. She currently co-runs the Carceral State Project at the University of Michigan and recently was awarded a Guggenheim Fellowship to work on her next book about the long history of the 1985 police bombing of MOVE in Philadelphia.

Keynote 3

Professor Gillian O'Brien, 'Gatekeepers. Then and Now'

For as long as there have been institutions there have been gatekeepers keeping people both within and outside the high walls that surround them. There were metaphorical gatekeepers, too, who decided what should be known about these institutions. This paper will explore two types of Irish institutions – prisons and convents – considering the gatekeepers of today: those who decide what stories to tell and how to tell them.

Professor Gillian O'Brien: is Professor of Public History at Liverpool John Moores University and the author of *The darkness echoing: Ireland's places of famine, death and rebellion* (Penguin, 2020)

Panel Abstracts

Panel 1A: Medical and social institutions

Brian Casey (Durham), 'Collaboration, confrontation and care: The Franciscan Missionaries of the Divine Motherhood and the provision of healthcare in provincial Ireland, 1942-1970'

The arrival in Ballinasloe in 1942 coincided with an ambitious period of international growth for the religious congregation of women that became known as the Franciscan Missionaries of the Divine Motherhood. Portiuncula Hospital was part of a wider change taking place in healthcare in Ireland during the mid-20th century. This also paralleled changes in healthcare globally as improvements in standardisation, sterilisation, specialisation in hospitals as well as the antiseptic revolution meant that hospital care was no longer feared.

Despite the majority of funding for the construction of the hospital coming from the State, the FMDM's control is a reflection of the place of Catholic Social Teaching in Irish life. They were religious entrepreneurs of healthcare, navigating and negotiating local and national bureaucracies. This brought them into disagreements with several hospital doctors and Bishop William Philbin of Clonfert.

This paper explores the establishment of Portiuncula Hospital, paying attention to the confrontations and collaborations that the Congregation engaged in to deliver care to a wide part of the Irish midlands. It does this using the largely unexplored archives of the Congregation; many of the details see the Sisters acting as accidental ethnographers. It places the Congregation within the wider context of healthcare provision in Ireland, namely the Health Acts of 1947, 1953 and 1970 and how the modern methods of the Congregation fitted in with significant efforts at health reform. Portiuncula, their first mission outside England, became part of an international infrastructure of Franciscan healthcare the Congregation came to build and manage across the world.

Brian Casey: is FMDM Fellow in the History of Catholicism and is based in the Department of Theology and Religion at Durham University. His current research focuses upon the Franciscan Missionaries of the Divine Motherhood, tracing their growth from a single institution to being present in twenty countries. He has published extensively on various aspects of agrarian radicalism and the land question in Britain and Ireland and Irish Catholicism in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

Helen Doyle (Maynooth), 'Institutions of care or confinement? The success and failure of the Irish District Lunatic Asylum system in the nineteenth-century.'

In the 1950s, Ireland with a population of just under three million, had over 21,000 patients confined in district lunatic asylums. This shocking figure gave Ireland the highest number, per capita, in the world incarcerated in asylums at this time.

What makes this fact even more shocking is that initially Ireland was a world leader in terms of its care and treatment of its lunatic population. It was one of the first countries in the world to have a system of asylums dedicated solely to the care of lunatic paupers. The first ten district asylums were operating by the mid-1830s, and by the 1860s Ireland had twenty-two district asylums spread across the country. It was not until 1835 that France would have such a system, and 1845 before England followed suit. All early Irish district asylums adopted the emerging 'moral treatment' method of caring for patients, and it was believed that all lunatics could be cured.

Within a very short space of time it became clear that this was not the case, and initial optimism waned as asylums became overcrowded with 'incurables'. The aged, the infirm and the physically

disabled; those unwanted by society were deposited in asylums. As numbers rose it became impossible to offer 'moral treatment' to patients, and as standards began to slip many patients were treated extremely harshly. Ultimately, Irish district asylums became institutions of confinement rather than care, as had originally been the intention.

Helen Doyle: completed a BA (Hons) Humanities with DCU in 2017 and a Masters in History with the Open University in 2019. Her Master's thesis examined women and poverty in the Carlow District Lunatic Asylum. Helen is a third year PhD student with the History Department in Maynooth University, supervised by Dr Dympna McLoughlin and working on a PhD on 'The Criminal Lunatic (Ireland) Act 1838'.

Cormac Leonard (TCD), 'Deaf People in Irish Institutions, 1851 – 1922'

The recent recognition of Irish Sign Language in the 2017 ISL Act has galvanised Ireland's Deaf community; its sense of itself, its language and culture, and a history that is diverse, multifaceted and rich. This paper examines the Irish Deaf community through the experiences of its members in various institutions - the deaf residential schools that began in the 19th century, the workhouses from which many deaf pupils were drawn (and indeed returned to), the prisons to which some were sentenced and the asylums that many found themselves within. Not only were deaf people to be found in such institutions at far higher rates than the general population of Ireland, but their experience of institutional confinement was markedly different, with barriers and oppression ever present. The reasons that sign language users chose to - or were condemned to - use these institutions often reflect a set of linguistic, educational and cultural realities very different to those of other Irish paupers, prisoners and inmates. It will be shown that despite disproportionately high rates of institutionalisation, many kinds of institution in Ireland were, to their boards and officers, clearly an ill fit for deaf inmates. Frequent interaction and correspondence on the subject was to be found between boarding schools, Boards of guardians, medical officers and prison governors, and deaf inmates could find themselves shuttled between institutions. Deaf inmates themselves were not voiceless in these processes, and challenged decisions and expressed preference and agency through writing and sign language.

Cormac Leonard: is a professional Irish Sign Language (ISL) / English interpreter with experience of professional interpreting in a range of settings, including conference, legal, medical, educational, performance, and religious interpreting. He is also a trainer of interpreters, and a keen genealogist and family history tutor. He has a long-standing fascination with the history of Deaf people and the historical development of Irish Sign Language, and has presented and published work on Deaf people's experiences of nineteenth- and early twentieth-century courts and prisons, sign language interpreting in Irish courts in the period, Deaf education's links to the Irish Poor Law, and the experience of Deaf inmates of Irish workhouses. His PhD, entitled 'Deaf People in Ireland: Education, Poverty, and the Law, 1851-1922', was completed in 2023. Other published work includes (jointly with John Bosco Conama) an investigation into the historical roots of ISL and research on the sociolinguistics of Irish Sign Language.

Panel 1B: Political, military and security institutions

Shane Browne (UCD), ““Playing at soldiering”: the National Volunteers, 1914-17”

A somewhat overlooked organisation, this paper examines the National Volunteers (NV), one of the largest uniformed paramilitaries operating in Ireland during the First World War. Born from a split in the Irish Volunteers in the autumn of 1914, the NVs remained loyal to John Redmond, leader of the Irish Parliamentary Party from 1900-18. Often associated with the British war effort, most NVs did not commit themselves to foreign service. Thus, drawing on newspaper sources and the organisation’s archival collection, this paper utilises the movement as a case study into associational culture, consumer nationalism and masculinity in Ireland during the war. It will emphasise that volunteering was part and parcel of public life, with men and women taking part in a wide range of military and social activities between 1914-17. The volunteering phenomenon even impacted upon consumers, with shopkeepers selling military attire. As an expression of masculinity, the NVs also form part of a wider conversation. Uniforms held an intrinsic appeal, especially when it came to displays of martial masculinity. Ironically, as will be explored, numerous men dropped out of the NVs because they were ridiculed for ‘playing at soldiering’ when the tide turned on Redmond for his pro-war stance.

Dr Shane Browne: is an occasional lecturer and researcher at University College Dublin. He is currently working on a project with UCD Archives focusing on a history of the Irish revolution. His PhD thesis examined the National Volunteers, the paramilitary force loyal to the Home Rule movement, and my research interests include the study of paramilitarism, associational culture, arms trading, and veteranship during the Irish revolutionary period.

Amélie Gaillat (MIC Limerick), ‘The establishment of intelligence services as institutions in Europe at the end of the 19th century’

At the end of the 19th century, formal institutional changes in the gathering intelligence were established in England, Ireland, and France. However, since the early 1800s, the three countries monitored suspects and collected information on their activities. In France, this started with the establishment of the Minister of the Police by Napoleon Bonaparte. In Ireland, the birth of the Irish Republican Brotherhood, forced the police to start observing Fenian activities and following their movements. While in England, since the 1848 revolutions, detectives and informants had been tasked to monitor and gather information on refugees coming to England from continental Europe. Therefore, all three police were accustomed to political policing practices.

The agitation of the 1880s provided a path towards an institutionalization of such practices. In France, the republican police developed a variety of methods to monitor anarchist activities before reinforcing the role of the Special Commissioners and creating the ‘Direction des recherches’ at the Préfecture de Police in 1894. In Ireland, the Phoenix Park Murders in 1882 forced the central administration to reorganize its system of ‘law and order’ to counter Fenian agitation. This eventually led to the establishment of a real secret service, known as the Crime Branch Special, in 1890. In England, the dynamite campaign targeting the country in the 1880s, resulted in the development of a ‘counterterrorism’ network but proved itself to be inefficient because of a lack of communication and different methodological views. Eventually, the Metropolitan Police Special Branch was established in 1887, to centralize the information gathered and implement the policies accordingly.

This paper aims to show that the establishment of institutions in charge of collecting intelligence in England, Ireland, and France at the end of the 19th century, was the result of a need for a system to efficiently administrate previously existing political policing practices and will reflect on how similar institutions functioned across different political and legal spaces.

Amélie Gaillat: Graduated from SciencesPo Paris with a Research Masters in History and is currently a 3rd year of my PhD student in History at Mary Immaculate College, Limerick, working under the supervision of Dr Richard Mc Mahon and Dr Brian Hugues on a thesis entitled *Comparing centralised and regional policing: maintaining order in times of political agitation in France, England and Ireland (1880-1914)*. In 2022, Amélie received an Irish Research Council (IRC) Government of Ireland Postgraduate Scholarship for the two-remaining years of my study and has previously presented papers at the University of Limerick AHSS Annual Postgraduate Research Conference and at the IHSA 2023 annual conference.

Tom McGrath (Maynooth), Begrudging republicans? An examination of the Irish Republican Association of South Africa, 1919–22

In September 1920, delegates from the Irish National Association of South Africa met in the Johannesburg Irish Club to discuss the future of the group. Following protracted debates from the attendees, the decision was made to change the name of the organisation. The Irish Republican Association of South Africa (IRASA) – as it was henceforth known – stood as the largest Irish society in South African history and branches could be found in almost every major urban centre of the country.

As the new moniker suggested the group's focus was explicitly republican and Donal McCracken has described it as 'unashamedly Sinn Féin in allegiance'. Yet, this republicanism was more nuanced than the façade of the organisation suggested. Certainly, in the initial months of its existence, the group was united behind one goal. Frequent meetings were organised in support of the Irish Republic, funds were raised and sent back to Ireland and the organisation's journal, *The Republic*, continued to be published under the editorship of the Cape Town academic, Benjamin Farrington. However, the Anglo-Irish Treaty shattered any notions of unity within the IRASA and in the months leading up to its signing, the unstable foundations of the organisation became evident.

This paper will account for this process and argue that what lay at the core of these fundamental issues was that the membership of the IRASA was not, in fact, mostly made up of idealistic republicans. The reality was that many of the IRASA's most influential leaders had actually hailed from the Home Rule tradition and this became increasingly pronounced as the Treaty debates continued. The prospect of dominion status and peace revealed the level of disagreement amongst its membership and this played a significant role in its ultimate dissolution in mid-1922.

Tom McGrath: is an Irish Research Council Postgraduate Scholar in the Department of History at Maynooth University. His thesis, entitled 'An examination of the Irish in South Africa, c.1921–61', seeks to further our understanding of the Irish South African community by examining how the development of Ireland, Northern Ireland and South Africa impacted upon the relatively small Irish population on the southern tip of Africa.

Panel 2: Ireland in time of war / Family matters

Part 1: Ireland in Time of War

Susie Deedigan (QUB), “Another winter here would finish us off’: female political prisoners in Armagh and Mountjoy, 1939-45’

During the Second World War, or the Emergency as it was known in independent Ireland, forty-seven republican women were held in Mountjoy, Dublin and twenty-four were held in Armagh Gaol. These women’s experiences of imprisonment varied widely, not only because of the differing conditions in the two prisons, but also because of their individual socio-economic circumstances and status within the republican movement.

This paper discusses the lived experience of political imprisonment in both prisons and explores the gendered nature of both states’ handling of female subversives in this period. Women’s diet, access to parcels, visiting rights and general wellbeing were all sources of tension and, at times, resistance. Whilst factions emerged and two hunger-strikes were undertaken in Armagh, the situation in Mountjoy was relatively free from disturbance. The paper discusses these differences to analyse what they reveal about both states’ approach to handling female political prisoners. Concerns for the women’s ‘moral welfare’, raised by the state and by the women themselves, are also considered. Additionally, a small number of the women interned were mothers and as such their cases epitomise the transgression of expected gendered norms and illuminate how the dilemma of interning mothers was handled by the institutions.

By considering the collective and individual experiences of these women’s incarceration, we can better understand the impact of the institutions on their lives, whilst also examining the influence of gender on the government’s approach to political imprisonment during a period of international conflict.

Susie Deedigan: is a final year PhD candidate at Queen’s University, Belfast. She recently completed a visiting research studentship in the Institute of European Studies at the University of California, Berkeley. She previously studied at Trinity College, Dublin and Balliol College, Oxford. Her PhD, funded by the Department for the Economy, comparatively examines the impact of gender on political imprisonment during the Second World War in Ireland. Her previous research and broader interests include: militancy and Irish suffrage, female activism, labour and trade unionism, female associational culture and histories of incarceration. She has presented widely and contributed to online publications. She is a Postgraduate Representative on the Executive Committee of the Women’s History Association of Ireland.

Tim Ellis Dale (Teeside), “‘Neuter-ality?’ The Irish Defence Forces as an institution of masculinity during the Emergency, 1939-1945’

Irish history has justly focussed on the connection between warfare and masculinity, with significant attention paid to the construction of masculinity during times of violence in Irish history, chiefly the Irish Revolution and the Troubles (see Banerjee, 2012 and Beatty, 2016). Significantly less research, however, has explored the construction of Irish masculinity, during the Second World War, when the Irish state remained neutral.

This paper, drawing on research in the Irish military archives, funded by the British Academy Small Grant, argues that a discourse of masculinity heavily permeated the Irish Defence Forces during the Emergency.

The Defence Forces presented itself as strengthening the masculinity of Ireland's manhood. One Defence Forces publication in 1945 remarked 'it is the avowed policy of the Army to make the men who join it not only soldiers of the highest quality, but also better men, morally and physically.' Interestingly while most European armed forces maintained female auxiliary services, no such organisation existed in the Defence Forces, with the sole exception of a tiny Army Nursing Corps. At a time in which both gender relations and neutrality continue to be hotly debated within contemporary Ireland, this paper offers an original and incisive contribution to this discussion.

Dr Tim Ellis-Dale has worked as a Senior Lecturer in History at Teesside University. He completed his PhD in 2020 and has presented research at numerous conferences in Great Britain, Ireland, Spain, and the USA. In 2019 he co-organised the New Directions in Irish History Conference at Teesside. He has also published work on visual culture and masculinities in Irish History in journals such as *Éire-Ireland*. Most recently, in Spring 2022, he was awarded £9,950 through the British Academy Small Grant scheme to conduct a research project entitled 'Neuter-ality? Masculinity, politics, and neutrality in Emergency Ireland, 1939-1945.'

Part 2: Family matters

David Ryan, 'Personal or public? The relationship between public history and genealogy'

Genealogy has become a popular pastime and a growing profession worldwide. Both genealogy and public history can help in illuminating the connections between individuals in the present and their connections to the larger context of history. For many, their own family history may provide the entry point for understanding these connections. The majority of the public likely develop an interest in genealogy through the various family history themed television series, consumer DNA tests, the creation of an online family tree or membership of a local family history society. Many of the digital collections made available by Irish libraries and archives is in response to this growing interest in family history. Some research institutions even offer an in-house genealogical research service. But how strong is the connection between genealogy and public history in an Irish context? Can we claim the existence of such a thing as public genealogy? And if so, what does that look like? This paper will look at public interactions with genealogy and how institutions such as record repositories and genealogical organisations have responded to this.

David Ryan: is a genealogist and oral historian based in Cork. He has a Diploma in genealogy and a Masters in Medieval History from University College Cork. He is currently studying for a Masters in Public History and Cultural Heritage with the University of Limerick. David has worked as a professional genealogist for nearly a decade.

Panel 3A: Leisure, past-times and volunteering

Nebiha Guiga (ZfL Berlin), 'Social conflicts and volunteer work in the Royal National Lifeboat Institution (1850-1914)'

The history of humanitarianism in the 19th Century, and more specifically of the lifeboat movement, has so far only paid limited attention to the experience of rank-and-file, working-class volunteers and the ways in which they interacted with the broader moral framework of humanitarian causes. In order to more deeply explore this history, this paper looks at social conflicts between lifeboat crews and local committees as recorded in inspection reports of the Royal National Lifeboat Institution. It argues that these conflicts hinge on the double nature of lifeboat work as both labour and moral duty, and the ways in which different social actors interpret these two aspects of lifeboating.

Relying on cases of conflicts from thirty-eight stations in the North-East of England and East Coast of Ireland between 1850 and 1914, as described in the Institution's inspections reports kept in the RNLI archives in Poole, the paper follows a typology of social conflicts, mainly due to factors such as pay, injury and disaster compensation, and cases of refusal to enter into service. It thus offers a more precise portrait of the Royal National Lifeboat Institution, taking into account the various social class composing it as well as its international nature.

Nebiha Guiga: has a PhD in history from the EHESS and Universität Heidelberg working on the treatment of wounded soldiers during the Napoleonic wars. She is currently a postdoctoral researcher at the Leibniz Zentrum für Literatur- und Kulturforschung in Berlin where she takes part on the ERC project Archipelagic Imperatives. Shipwreck and Lifesaving in European Societies since 1800.

Conor Heffernan (Ulster), "'Gossip from the Emerald Isle": Associational Physical Culture in 1950s Ireland'

From the late 1940s to early 1960s, Irishman Leo Bowes headed a monthly column in British fitness magazine, *Health and Strength Magazine*. In Bowes' columns, Irishmen's (and at times women's) efforts to build new strength communities were not only detailed in glowing prose, but shown in 'real time.' Despite being published in England, Bowes' columns became a de facto space where Irish physical culturists sought out new training partners, friendships, and fellow exercisers interested in establishing gymnasiums and competitions. In effect, a print community was established wherein the fitness magazine became a marketplace of ideas for Irish exercisers in their teens, twenties, and thirties, to establish connections. Taking *Health & Strength* magazine as an institution, this presentation does two things. First it provides a deep reading of Bowes' columns, noting the connections formed therein (including those subtle allusions to same-sex rendezvous). Next, and more importantly, the presentation scrutinizes what impact *Health and Strength* had in mediating interactions between Irish men and women and those moments when the magazine directly intervened in assisting Irish exercisers (as happened regularly when new gyms were being established in the island of Ireland). In doing so, the presentations sheds light on an important form of Irish associational culture during the 1950s which has previously been absent from historical research.

Conor Heffernan: is Lecturer in the Sociology of Sport at Ulster University. In 2021 Conor published *The History of Physical Culture* and in 2022 Conor published *The History of Physical Culture*.

Panel 3B: Institutions in late 19th and early 20th century Dublin

Carly Collier (UCD), 'The first "Lady Sanitary Sub-Officers" in Dublin, c. 1898-1920'

The figure of Charles Cameron, who presided as Dublin's Medical Officer of Health for almost 50 years (1874-1921), looms large in the history of the city's public health policies and its sanitary infrastructure at the turn of the twentieth century, a period during which Dublin was widely viewed as being plagued by poverty and disease. Cameron, however, marshalled a considerable workforce who supported his efforts to improve the hygiene, health and welfare of the city's inhabitants, particularly the poor and working class, and it was during his tenure that the first women were appointed as 'Lady' Sanitary Sub-Officers (hereafter SSOs).

The first female SSO was appointed (albeit on a temporary basis) by Dublin Corporation in 1898. The 1901 census reveals that, by then, 4 women were employed as SSOs; a photograph of 1909 included in Cameron's annual public health report for the city shows 6 women SSOs posing alongside their 27 male counterparts; and in 1911, the occupations of 12 women living in Dublin were registered as being, variously, 'Sanitary Inspector', 'Sanitary Officer' and 'SSO'. Although Dublin Corporation was the first (or certainly the second) Irish local authority to introduce women on its sanitary staff in such roles, and Cameron publicly advocated for the employment of women in this arena, the role that these women SSOs played in improving the public health of Dublin has not yet been explored.

This work-in-progress paper will introduce the first group of women to serve as SSOs in Ireland's capital city, and seek to investigate how the social, political and religious forces of the period shaped their professional contributions to improving the living standards and mortality rates of 'dear dirty Dublin' at the beginning of the twentieth century.

Carly Collier: is a historian and curator. She is currently the postdoctoral researcher on the IRC/AHRC-funded digital humanities project 'Typhoid, Cockles, and Terrorism: The Turbulent History of Anglo-Irish Typhoid Control' (UCD). Her background is in the visual arts and material culture, and she has published widely on nineteenth-century British art, collecting and taste.

Joe Curran (TCD), 'The Slimy Fount Revisited? Dublin Castle in its Urban Context c. 1801-1923'

In 1906 Arthur Griffith claimed that the Irish Lord Lieutenant was 'maintained...as a fount for all that is slimy in our national life.' Only a few decades earlier, however, a wide range of Dubliners, including many moderate nationalists, were protesting against the proposed abolition of the Lord Lieutenancy. They claimed the Lord Lieutenancy was vital for maintaining Dublin as a capital city and for supporting the city's businesses. This paper examines Dublin Castle as a city institution – one that Dublin's inhabitants often wanted to benefit from while also criticising. It considers the Castle's rarely explored patronage of the city's businesses and charities and how public attitudes towards this activity changed over time. This not only sheds light on the Castle as an institution but on Dublin as a city. It will enhance our understanding of Dublin in wider urban context by considering how the Castle's presence affected Dublin compared with the position of institutional authorities in other cities, especially in the secondary capitals of the Habsburg Empire.

Joe Curran: is an Irish Research Council Postdoctoral Fellow at Trinity College Dublin. He is working on a project entitled 'An Urban History of Dublin Castle c. 1801-1923' which explored social, economic, and cultural connections between Dublin Castle and Dublin city.

Adrian Kirwan (Maynooth), 'An Irish Radium Institute: The Royal Dublin Society and the promotion of radioactive therapy in twentieth-century Ireland'

Science was an important activity for the members of the RDS throughout its existence with the Society coming to play an important role in formal and informal scientific education by the nineteenth century. However, the founding of the Department of Science and Art in 1853 led to tension as it sought to regulate such activities. In response the RDS sought other avenues for its scientific energies. Central to these efforts in the first half of the twentieth century was the newly discovered element radium. Radium proved an ideal nexus for the Society's scientific and philanthropic impulses due to its medical applications, in particular its promise to treat cancer. With this purpose in mind, the RDS established a Radium Institute in 1914, just two years after the establishment of Marie Curie's *Institut du Radium*, in Paris. This paper discusses the reception, assimilation, and dissemination of this new element and medical knowledge of radium therapy by the membership of the RDS, as well as Ireland's wider scientific and medical communities. It will identify the functions that the new institute served and how radium therapy was promoted. In doing so, it demonstrates that radium played a pivotal role in maintaining the RDS as a scientific institution well into the twentieth century.

Adrian Kirwan: Adrian Kirwan graduated with a Ph.D. in history (2017) from Maynooth University, where he currently teaches on the Critical Skills programme. His research focuses on the interaction between science, technology and society. He has published on these topics in journals such as the *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy* and *The British Journal for the History of Science*, as well as recently co-editing the eleventh volume of *The Correspondence of John Tyndall* (University of Pittsburgh Press).

Panel 4A: Universities

Alan Ford (Nottingham), 'Trinity College and the study of Irish Religious History'

Religion in modern Ireland was a highly contested subject. In terms of educational institutions this made it difficult to tackle. From national schools to universities the churches and the English government fought repeatedly over its status. At the level of higher education, the government simply gave up, producing the 'godless colleges', whose legacy can still be seen to this day in the absence of religious studies or theology in many Irish universities.

Where religion *did* feature in universities it was in an overtly denominational context, as in Trinity or Maynooth. This paper examines the fate of the study of religious history in Trinity. Firmly embedded in the institution which trained Church of Ireland clergy, with a series of Professors who were ordained clergy serving in the School of Divinity, the prospects for a non-sectarian approach to the subject seemed slim. But a closer examination of the outlook and training of the main holders of the chair of ecclesiastical history from Samuel Butcher (1850-52) down to Hugh Jackson Lawlor (1898-1933), together with a close reading of their surviving lectures, correspondence, books and articles, suggests that the picture was more complex, as the significant advances in the writing of ecclesiastical history in Germany and England during the later nineteenth century shaped their academic approach. Add to this the strident criticism from the evangelical wing of the Church of Ireland of the failure of the Trinity Divinity School to teach ordinands at Trinity 'proper Protestant history', and it becomes apparent that, despite the denominational setting, religious history at Trinity nevertheless made considerable progress in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

The paper will conclude with a comparative summary of the state of Irish Catholic Church of Ireland, and Presbyterian religious history at the beginning of the twentieth century, and the extent to which institutional 'embeddedness' shaped/limited/encouraged broader historical enquiry.

Alan Ford: is an Emeritus Professor of Theology at the University of Nottingham. He is currently working on a book titled: *Catholic or Protestant? Writing Irish religious history, 1600-2000*. His most recent publication is "'The Cost of Democracy": The Church of Ireland and Its Ritual Canons, 1871–1974', *Church History*, 91 (2022).

Jeremiah Garsha (UCD), 'The Making and Moving of the University Campus: A Global History of Student Protest and Surveillance Architecture'

This paper explores the physicality of academic 'institutions' by using university campuses as its source material. Taking University College Dublin as its main case study, this paper will assess the ways global student protests movements from the 1960s until present localized around physical structures of the academic campus. It analyses the performance of protest, mapped onto campus architecture. In so doing the paper seeks to uncover the power and symbolic nature of campuses as institutions and the ways they embody the state yet create spaces for alternative discourses. The paper concludes with an exploration of post-1968 campus relocation away from city centres, as well as structural organization to stop occupation movements, in order to elucidate institutional urban planning as a means to control and surveil student populations.

Dr Jeremiah Garsha is an assistant professor in global history at University College Dublin. His teaching and research focus on the performance and memory of colonial and decolonising violence. He is a cultural historian investigating how historical narratives are created by and around physical

materials, from collected artefacts and human remains, to visual images and architecture. He holds a PhD in World History from the University of Cambridge.

Martin Walsh (Limerick), 'Giving voice to those that made a university: The University of Limerick Oral History Project'

The proposed paper will provide analysis of the Oral History Project running at the University of Limerick since 2008. The project, established ahead of the fortieth anniversary of the foundation of the university in 2012, was tasked with recording the stories of the first students and staff to work at the then NIHE. Since then, the project has expanded considerably to include the narratives of those that worked and studied at the National College of Physical Education later Thomond College of Education which amalgamated with the university of Limerick in 1991, and those that fought for a university for Limerick in the 1960s.

The paper will argue that significant challenges exist in firstly identifying potential interviewees and encouraging them to participate in the project. Additionally, those interviewed can often be hesitant to reveal details of their time at the university believing that their contribution was not significant. The proposed paper will look at ways in which the reluctance of the interviewee is overcome. Another challenge is that for many interviewees they were unaware of the project existence prior to been contacted. To this end, new ways of making the project more visible have been explored including an exhibition on 'pioneering women' at the university over the past fifty years that uses quotes from the transcripts. Additionally, an oral history book of the university is nearing completion. Finally, the paper will examine other ways in which this rich social history can be used by scholars

Dr Martin Walsh: is the current project officer for the Oral History Project at the University of Limerick. He is currently completing an oral history book as part of UL50 to be launched later this year. His research is focused on the visibility of working-class women in the public sphere in England and in Ireland in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, and the fears moralists had about their exposure to immorality. Martin is committee member of the WHAI. His first book, Richard Devane SJ Social Commentator and Advocate, 1876 -1951, was published in 2019.

Panel 5: Economic and social institutions

Sarah Churchill (Drew University), 'At Home in the Unhomely: The Photographic Legacy of Mass Social Housing'

In Britain, Ireland and America, a housing crisis of a scale not seen since World War II is afoot. The problem is not just one of supply and demand but of what to build where, as communities actively oppose higher-density development. In all three nations, the single family home is central to cultural identity, but it wasn't always so. In the 1940s, a different future beckoned as governments embarked on unprecedented mass social housing investment. With public support, innovative housing concepts like the Pruitt-Igoe Homes in St. Louis (USA) and Park Hill, Sheffield (UK) inaugurated the promise of "living better together" with mixed results. Yet social housing remains a viable alternative to the market. In America alone there are over a million citizens living in public housing projects with many more in waiting.

The Neoliberal turn, however, declared social housing dead on arrival, even as such experiments were beginning to bear fruit. Photography was instrumental to social housing's demise, depicting council "sink estates" as "the unhome," a place in which people could be housed but never *at home* in the spatial imaginary. As Stuart Hall has argued, "photographs interpret historical events ideologically. But in the very act of grounding themselves in fact, in history, they become universal 'myth' not reality." (Hall, 1973) Photography was part of a visual ecosystem which helped to kill public support for state investment by maligning modern social housing as "slums in the sky." In this way, it reinforced misleading theories of environmental determinism in ways that aligned with political and commercial interests. However, as Ariella Azoulay has argued, if we read against the "disciplinary frame," we can recover the excess possibilities of photography (Azoulay: 2008; Tagg: 2009). In other words, many of these same photographs stand ready to speak to a narrative which better reflects the experience of social housing, which as many residents have argued, rarely matches the myth. This paper seeks to reconsider the mythic representation of social housing. Looking to those less studied photographs of social housing estates by Mick Jones, Bill Stephenson, George Plemper and others, I'll consider also the significance of photography in historical narratives more broadly.

Anna Devlin (TCD), 'The impact of Irish economic development associational groups in the early twentieth century'

'Ireland for some time has been living in a fever of economics. (Eóin MacNéill, *An Claidheamh Soluis*, 5 June 1904)

A key nationalist belief in decades prior to independence was that Ireland had not thrived under the Union and indeed its industrial growth was disappointing when considered in a comparative perspective. Industrial development, even among those who regarded Ireland as primarily an agricultural economy, was believed to be essential to provide employment for large numbers of young people who would otherwise emigrate. Many traditional industries also struggled as the Irish economy became more exposed to the British and world economies. The British administration in Ireland did not undertake economic development except in relation to agriculture through the Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction and to a confined degree under the Congested Districts Board. The impetus instead fell to various voluntary organisations. What kind of impact did these groups have at the time and in the transition to independence? In this paper, the economic

thought of these, mainly nationalist-orientated, economic development focussed groups is considered and the changes in their activities and attitudes in relation to industrial development over the decades prior to self-government explored.

This paper initially explores the environment in which these organisations operated and then provides an overview of the various different groups, their motivation and scope of operation. Of primary interest are the Industrial Development Associations – which were founded in the early 1900s in Irish cities and counties e.g. Dublin, Cork, Limerick, Galway, Mayo, Derry, Belfast. The period also saw the emergence and promotion of industrial co-operatives, following the success of the agricultural co-operativism. Philanthropy was a driver behind earlier organisations such as the Irish Industries Association which focussed on ‘home industries’, while a belief in the mechanism of protectionism other stimulated initiatives such as the British goods boycott. This under-explored landscape of the ‘medium’ economic thought of these associational groups will be examined to understand their impact at the time and in the transition to an independent economy.

Panel 6: Race and slavery

Daniel Gilman (Cambridge), 'Soundscapes of Abolition: The Role of Auditory Institutions in the Eighteenth-Century Campaign Against the Slave Trade.'

This paper examines the institutional role of auditory environments in the abolitionist movement in London from 1789 to 1807, with specific focus on the physical buildings of churches and the House of Commons. By integrating primary sources such as speeches, sermons, and architectural blueprints, it investigates how these institutions, considered as auditory landscapes, influenced the rhetoric and strategies to abolish the slave trade.

Employing an interdisciplinary approach, this study merges traditional historical research with principles from the emerging field of sound studies. By interpreting primary sources through the prism of sonic experience, it uncovers fresh insights into the lived realities of debates over the slave trade.

The first part of the analysis spotlights churches as crucial institutions where the soundscape was strategically harnessed by abolitionist preachers. It explores how Christopher Wren's architectural designs facilitated the creation of 'auditory churches' across London, enhancing congregants' auditory experiences and empowering these figures to influence public opinion against the slave trade.

The second part of this paper explores the House of Commons, highlighting how Wren's acoustical principles shaped its renovations. The architectural design, originally intended for a chapel, dictated the rules of debate and, moulded by pulpit oratory, enriched abolitionist speeches with biblical vocabulary and theological narratives.

This research elucidates the intricate interplay between physical buildings and established practices of public speaking, demonstrating their mutual influence on institutional dynamics. By examining the role of sound within these institutional settings, this paper emphasises how auditory experiences can sway public sentiment and instigate political change. Institutions, in this context, are more than static structures; they also serve as dynamic, sensory arenas where history unfolds.

Daniel Gilman: is a PhD candidate at Cambridge University in the Department of History. His research focuses on platform culture, the art of public speaking, and the campaign to end the British slave trade. He is a public speaking coach and a former speech writer for Canadian Members of Parliament.

Patrick Walsh (TCD), 'Trinity's Colonial Legacies: Public history, public reckoning, and the challenges of investigating awkward institutional pasts'

In 2021 Trinity College Dublin began a research project investigating the university's historic connections to empire, transatlantic slavery, and colonisation. It draws on extensive archival research but is also very much a public history project and since its inception we have been committed to conducting our research in public in a transparent fashion. Initially funded for two years and now extended for a third year our work has had a significant impact on the university and its presentation of its past in the public domain. This paper will firstly offer some reflections on our work so far and some of the questions and challenges that it has raised. Particular attention will be paid to two significant outcomes of our research work, the return of human remains controversially stolen from Inishbofin in 1890 and the de-naming of the university's main arts and humanities library – the former Berkeley Library. In this presentation we will focus on the evidence-based approach we have

taken in tandem with a wider public-facing consultative process. The second part of this paper will look forward to the next stages of our project focusing on how we seek to address Trinity's colonial impact in Ireland as well as on some of the myriad ways in which Trinity men (and they are almost all men) shaped and were shaped by the global forces of empire.

Dr Patrick Walsh: is assistant professor of eighteenth-century Irish history and a fellow of Trinity College Dublin. He has published widely on the economic, political and social history of eighteenth-century Ireland. He is currently co-director (with Dr Ciaran O'Neill) of the Trinity Colonial Legacies Project.

Jonathan Daniel Wells (Michigan), 'Partisan Institutions and the Legacy of Slavery: African Americans and the Democratic Party after the Civil War'

During the long, tortuous months of late 1884 and early 1885, nearly two decades after the Thirteenth Amendment formally ended American slavery, tens of thousands of African Americans were terrified that they would soon be re-enslaved. Rumors of a return to pre-Civil War race relations spread rapidly across the nation, especially in southern rural areas where most Black Americans still resided. The danger was deeply alarming and its roots lay in national politics: for the first time since before the Civil War, a Democrat would occupy the White House.

In retrospect, though African Americans themselves considered the 1884 campaign a crucial turning point in the march toward equality, the Democratic recapture of the White House was just one event that shaped the broader history of Black political party identification. Due to key developments in the post-Civil War Era, the constantly shifting postwar landscape at national and local political levels began to pull Black voters from their close allegiance with the Republican Party, facilitating the emergence of a Black independent political movement and even leading some to embrace the Democrats for the first time. This paper addresses the reasons why Black Americans began to rethink their attachment to partisan institutions in the years following emancipation.

Professor Jonathan Daniel Wells: is Professor of History at the University of Michigan. He is the author or editor of several books, including *The Origins of the Southern Middle Class: 1820-1861* (UNC Press, 2004); *Women Writers and Journalists in the Nineteenth-Century South* (Cambridge University Press, 2011); *The Southern Middle Class in the Long Nineteenth Century* (LSU Press, 2011); and *A House Divided: The Civil War and Nineteenth-Century America* (Routledge, second ed., 2016). His most recent books are *Blind no More: African American Resistance, Free Soil Politics, and the Coming of the Civil War* (UGA Press, 2019) and *The Kidnapping Club: Wall Street, Slavery, and Resistance on the Eve of the Civil War* (Hachette, 2020).

Lucy Wray (Bristol), 'Mission responses to Lascar: Race, religion and British ports in the nineteenth century'

Lucy Wray (QUB), 'Mission responses to Lascar: Race, religion and British ports in the nineteenth century'

In the nineteenth century, the British Merchant Marine was transformed by the employment of 'Lascars', a term used for seamen predominately from Asia, Africa, and the Caribbean. On the outbreak of war in 1914, 30% of merchant crews were born abroad. The majority were lascars, who comprised 1 in 6 of these men. Lascars disembarked at UK ports in their thousands annually.

But what did the everyday lives of lascars look like upon arrival? In addition to difficult working conditions and restrictions, lower pay and prejudice, they found it particularly challenging to find accommodation in British ports. For most of the nineteenth century, voluntary religious societies and missions were the mainstays of welfare, accommodation and support services for this extensive, vulnerable, multi-ethnic and multi-religious labour force.

This paper will explore institutions that provided temporary refuge for lascar, focusing predominantly on the archives of the Strangers Home for Asiatics in London and Liverpool's Mersey Mission to Seamen. This paper will explore the impact these institutions had on lascars' conditions and the extent to which they challenged or entrenched racial and religious hierarchies in the maritime workforce. Particular attention will be given to how the image of the lascar, both textually and visually, was created and perpetuated for British audiences in the promotional material. This research is part of the AHRC-funded *Mariners: Religion, Race and Empire in British Ports, 1801-1914*, at Bristol University.

Dr Lucy Wray: Lucy Wray is a research associate on the AHRC project, 'Mariners: Religion, Race and Empire in British ports, 1801-1914'. Lucy is a social and cultural historian of Ireland and Britain, specialising in lens-based sources. She completed her PhD at Queen's University, Belfast, researching the social and cultural history of nineteenth and twentieth-century Ireland through photography. Her doctoral thesis centred on the work of Belfast photographer Alexander Hogg (1870-1939), exploring representations of everyday life in the city. As well as urban history and visuality, Lucy's research concerns gender, class, poverty, philanthropy and consumption.

From 2022-2023 Lucy was a Research Associate at Ulster University, managing the Madill Archive project, a cultural heritage project supported by the National Lottery Heritage Fund. She is actively involved in public history, cultural heritage and museum initiatives. During her PhD, Lucy acquired placements with the British Library, London and National Museums Northern Ireland, working with their respective photographic collections. She has been employed on a freelance basis by institutions, including the National Portrait Gallery, to lend her expertise and consultation.