

Milwaukee Irish Fest Hedge School 2019

Update: June 17, 2019

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Friday, August 16

4:30 Literature: The Strange Case of Angela's Ashes

Controversy has surrounded Frank McCourt's *Angela's Ashes: A Memoir* since the day it was published in 1996. The biggest controversy is surely whether it is a memoir at all, or an exaggerated work of fiction. It won the Pulitzer Prize for nonfiction, but many claim it is really a novel. In Limerick City, the book was first met with considerable outrage (though today one can take the *Angela's Ashes* walking tour in Limerick; it departs from the Frank McCourt Museum). Other questions persist. Is it a book about Ireland, or is it a book about America? Why did a book about poverty and desperation become a smash hit in the very years that the Celtic Tiger was taking off? Is McCourt sincere or is he pandering to stereotypes? Is it a story about victimhood, or is it a story of triumph? One thing we know for sure is that *Angela's Ashes* now holds a permanent place in the Irish literary pantheon. And we also know that for better or worse, it has defined the Irish "misery memoir."

James Silas Rogers, University of St. Thomas, St. Paul, Minnesota

James Silas Rogers has been active in Irish Studies for more than forty years, as editor of *New Hibernia Review* and the director of the Center for Irish Studies at the University of St. Thomas, and a past president of the American Conference for Irish Studies. His publications focus on Irish-American literature, chiefly memoir. They include *Irish-American Autobiography: The Divided Hearts of Athletes, Priests, Pilgrims, and More* (2017); *Extended Family: Essays on Being Irish American* from *New Hibernia Review* (2013); and a chapter on diasporic memoir in *A History of Irish Autobiography* (2018). He is also an accomplished essayist and poet.

5:30 History: George Galphin and the Ulster Connections to Native America, 1700-1783

Throughout the eighteenth-century, families from Ulster (Northern Ireland) flocked to the American South to take part in the deerskin trade. Many of these immigrants intermarried with the Creek and Cherokee Indians, creating intercultural families and communities in the process, which then encouraged more peoples to immigrate to America from Ulster. This talk focuses specifically on the family of George Galphin, one of the wealthiest Indian traders in South Carolina and Georgia prior to the American Revolution and originally from County Armagh, who forged a series of "Ulster Connections" to Creek Country and Native America in the eighteenth-century.

Bryan Rindfleisch, Marquette University, Milwaukee, Wisconsin

Bryan C. Rindfleisch is an assistant professor of history at Marquette University. He specializes in Early (Colonial) American, Native American, and Atlantic World history. His first book—*George Galphin's Intimate Empire: The Creek Indians, Family, and Colonialism in Early America*—focused on the intersection of colonial, Native, imperial, and Atlantic histories, peoples, and places in the eighteenth-century American South. His current project explores the intersections of Creek and Cherokee peoples in the seventeenth- and eighteenth-centuries. They intermarried with one another, waged war against—and forged peace with—each other, shared their languages and cultural practices, hunted and lived alongside one another on the fringes of their territories, along with many other connections that illustrate how intertwined their communities and histories were. His hope, then, is to change the ways in which historians understand the complex and inter-dimensional histories of Native Peoples and regions in Early America.

6:30 Archaeology: The Archaeology of Saint Patrick

Saint Patrick is renowned throughout the world as Ireland's patron saint and is celebrated with various festivities on March 17th each year. He is indeed the most famous non-Irish Irishman! However, he did not banish snakes from Ireland and it is very unlikely he ever drank green Guinness! But who was he and where did he come from? Can his legacy be traced in the archaeological record? This talk will address these issues, drawing on both historical and archaeological resources. We will trace Patrick's way through the country, highlighting some of the sites and stories associated with the man himself. We will also take a look at the excavation taking place in Downpatrick, County Down, famous for being the burial place of Patrick.

Brian Sloan, Queens University Belfast, NI

Brian is an experienced field archaeologist working with the Centre for Archaeological Fieldwork, Queen's University Belfast for the last sixteen years. Since gaining his first Archaeological Excavation License in 2005, he has directed a number of excavations across the North of Ireland ranging from Prehistoric to Early Modern times. Brian is a specialist in the analysis of lithic artefacts, particularly those dating to the Mesolithic and Neolithic periods in Ireland (c. 7,000–2,000 BC). Brian has published a wide range of articles on both fieldwork projects as well as lithic assemblages recovered during excavations. Recently Brian has led the community-based investigations in Downpatrick, County Down, instructing fifty members of the local community in archaeological practice. The project investigated the Benedictine Abbey which occupied Cathedral Hill from the late twelfth century AD until the dissolution of the monasteries during Henry VIII's reign in the mid-sixteenth century AD. In his downtime, Brian enjoys all aspects of Irish culture, particularly its music and mythology.



Saturday, August 17

4:30 Literature: *The Strange Case of Angela's Ashes*

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1:30 Literature: *The "Green" Fairy-Faith of W. B. Yeats*

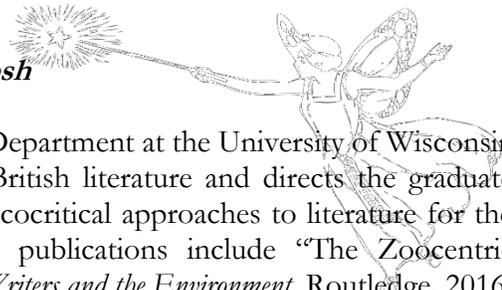
*Faeries, come take me out of this dull world,
For I would ride with you upon the wind,
Run on the top of the disbevelled tide,
And dance upon the mountains like a flame.*

~W.B Yeats, *The Land of Heart's Desire* (1894)

In his 1893 preface to *The Celtic Twilight: Faeries and Folklore*, W. B. Yeats writes that, through this volume of stories, he wishes "to create a little world out of the beautiful, pleasant, and significant things of this unmarred and clumsy world, and to show in a vision something of the face of Ireland to any of my own people who would look where I bid them." In doing so, however, he was not simply responding to the spiritual malaise and disenfranchisement that inspired so many late Victorians to seek alternative sources of wonder and systems of belief. He is also reviving the cultural identity of "mother Eire" through the literary trope of the

fairy—a figure that “greens” the literary landscape of the country by both recalling a pastoral idyll of pre-modern Ireland and personifying a nationalist ideal of the “Emerald Isle” itself. Looking closely at Yeats’s texts like *Fairy and Folk Tales of the Irish Peasantry* (1888), *Irish Fairy Tales* (1890), and *The Celtic Twilight* (1893), this light and lively talk will discuss how Yeats’s faeries encourage readers to consider a mystical relationship with nature that explores the liminal spaces between poor and rich, rural and urban, ancient and modern, indigenous and colonialist, material and spiritual. It is a vision of a distinctly Irish, nationalistic pastoral that anticipates and fosters the communal pride that Yeats later imagines galvanizing people “wherever green is worn” after 1916.

Christine Roth, University of Wisconsin Oshkosh



Christine Roth is a faculty member of the English Department at the University of Wisconsin Oshkosh, where she teaches nineteenth-century British literature and directs the graduate program in English. She also teaches courses on ecocritical approaches to literature for the Environmental Studies Department. Her recent publications include “The Zoocentric Ecology of Thomas Hardy’s Poetry” (in *Victorian Writers and the Environment*, Routledge, 2016) and “The Narrative Promise: Redesigning History in *La Gazette du Vieux Paris*.” (*CEA Critic*, 2016). Her work on Thomas Hardy’s elegies for household pets is forthcoming in a collection titled *Victorian Pets and Poetry* from Routledge in 2020.

2:30 TBD

3:30 Geography: Renaissance Galway, the Mid-Seventeenth Century

The presentation is concerned with the happenings in a small town on the west coast of Ireland in the middle of the seventeenth century. This was a transformative period in Irish history, one that resulted in massive social upheaval following the overthrow of the monarchy by the English parliament. The inhabitants of this town—members of the so-called “tribes” of Galway—had supported the royalist cause and, in consequence, lost everything when they surrendered to parliament forces in 1652. At the Restoration they hoped for a return of their former power and wealth. To this end they prepared a remarkable pictorial map, a bird’s eye view of their town in all its Renaissance glory. Conceived on a grand scale, this map was made to impress and its extensive tables of reference, lavish decoration, and heraldic embellishments allow the modern viewer an insight into the cultural, sociopolitical and religious outlook of the town’s former ruling elite: this is their story.

Paul Walsh, National Monuments Service Ireland

Paul Walsh has spent his career working in archaeology; first, as archaeological adviser with the national mapping agency, Ordnance Survey Ireland, and then as director of the “Archaeological Survey of Ireland” with the state’s National Monuments Service (Ireland). His research interests have focused on megalithic monuments, architecture, cartography and, most especially, the history and archaeology of his native city, Galway. He has written and lectured widely on all these topics and is co-author with Jacinta Prunty of *Galway c. 1200 to c. 1900: From Medieval Borough to Modern City* (2015) and *Galway/Gaillimh: Irish Historic Towns Atlas, No. 28* (2016), published by the Royal Irish Academy. His latest book, *Renaissance Galway*, will be

published by the Academy in May 2019 and launched at Milwaukee Irish Fest on Sunday, August 18.

4:30 History: A Tour of the “Hedge Schools” of Eighteenth-Century Dublin

The suggestion of “hedge schools” in Dublin might sound odd, since the term usually calls to mind informal, rural, Catholic day schools meeting in barns or other humble structures on the margins of legality (particularly in the eighteenth century). As the seat of British government in Ireland, Dublin was more urban and Protestant than most of the country, and thus one would think an unwelcome environment for illegal hedge schools. Nevertheless, as the demand for both practical and classical education grew over the course of the century, most of the schools in Dublin and the surrounding area—Protestant and Catholic alike—operated on the hedge school model: no funding other than student tuition and a curriculum tailored to popular demand.

This presentation will provide a brief “tour” of Georgian Dublin from the perspective of the schools that educated many of the city’s most (and least) notable citizens. Many of the city’s most recognizable landmarks—Grafton Street, St. Stephen’s Green, Marion Square, the Four Courts, Leinster House, Dublin Castle—were constructed or updated during this period of rapid growth and relative prosperity. As schools relocated from one part of town to another, they help us see how the city expanded into the surrounding areas that are today part of greater Dublin. And as they tried to attract and retain students, they left a record of newspaper advertisements that provide often amusing insights into the personalities and educational priorities of students, parents, teachers, and the Irish reading public.

Wade Mahon, University of Wisconsin–Stevens Point

Wade Mahon is Professor of English at the University of Wisconsin–Stevens Point, where he teaches Rhetorical Theory, British Literature, and Composition. He spent March of 2018 in snowy Dublin, as part of a sabbatical researching Irish education in the eighteenth century.

5:30 Music: Love and Nostalgia in the Imagination of Irish Traditional Music

Much has been written about the enormous journeys of traditional Irish music in the past couple of centuries. Many have been touched by the infectious melodies and rhythms of a music that had homes in the halls of the Gaelic aristocracy, the kitchens of the Irish peasantry, the dance halls of Tammany Hall New York and the concert halls of the globe. These journeys have played a part in creating ideas about Ireland and Irishness and have been transformative for Irish music and culture as well as the many others that it has touched. However, I am fascinated in the development of an understanding of this tradition that has been facilitated and perhaps demanded by these global encounters.

Teaching at the University of Limerick, on the banks of the river Shannon (paradoxically on the Clare side) I always try to remind students that the local musician in the mid-nineteenth century would have a very different world view of their music and its significance. At that time musicians would be adopting new European instruments, the products of the industrial revolution and purchased in the first rural shops and post-offices, such as the concertina and accordion. They were also adapting the pop-tunes and European dances of the day for their

own pleasure and amusement. It is fairly safe to say that the average peasant musician playing their music on the banks of the same river would not have regarded their music as traditional, East-Clare, or even Irish.

This presentation will examine the development of our understanding of Irish music, what has built its aesthetic systems, decides what is “traditional” what is “authentic,” what is valuable and, just as importantly, what is not. I believe that the role of nationalism has been overstated in the creation of the concept of this ‘national’ music. Perhaps more fundamental are feelings of love and nostalgia among communities of practice in Ireland, among its diaspora and the many people who have come to Irish music from elsewhere. What we can argue is that the apparent immediacy and democracy of face-to-face interaction, in small, immediate spaces and over time have played a central role in the creation of the complex and ever-evolving thing called Irish traditional music.

Niall Keegan, Irish World Academy of Music and Dance, Limerick, Ireland

Niall Keegan is course director of the Traditional Irish Music performance masters at the Irish World Academy of Music and Dance, University of Limerick and also teaches on the ethnomusicology program there. He is currently on the committee of the Folk Music Society of Ireland and director of the University of Limerick based project Nomad (aimed at honoring the music cultures of the traveling peoples at the University). He has given occasional lectures and taught instrumental classes at the Music Department of University College, Cork and University College, Galway, Sibelius Academy, Dublin Institute of Technology, Newcastle University, Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama among others. Niall has performed extensively throughout the country and abroad. In 1992 he was invited to record at the Traditional Music Archive in Dublin with the bodhran player and percussionist Mel Mercier. Niall has performed Mícheál Ó’ Súilleabháin’s concerto for flute and chamber orchestra, *Oilean* on several occasions in Ireland and Britain and as part of the jazz/trad fusion group Hiberno Jazz. He is currently guest director of the Adult Folkworks Sumer School in Durham, England.

6:30 Genealogy: To Find my Soul a Home: Evidence in Marriage for Irish Family History

This talk explores how marriages were made in Ireland, from courtship to reading the banns, negotiating the dowry, planning the marriage ceremony, and consummation. If any step was left out, it undermined lawful marriage, and left it open to challenge. What evidence survives and what does it tell us about love and marriage in the past?

Fiona Fitzsimons, Eneclann, Dublin, Ireland

Fiona Fitzsimons is a co-founder of Eneclann, and the Irish Family History Centre at EPIC, the Irish Emigration Museum in Dublin. Since 1996 she has led the Eneclann research team, and established their work as a benchmark in family history in Ireland and internationally. Between 2012 and 2016 she hosted the popular Summer Talks series in the National Library of Ireland and from 2013 she has organized the monthly Expert Workshops at the Royal Irish Academy, Dublin.



Sunday, August 18

11:30 TBD

12:30 Regional Style in Irish Traditional Music: A Cheat's Guide!

Ireland is a small place but its music, despite this, is one that does seem to be peculiarly complex and diverse to the outside (and many inside) observers. This is perhaps most apparent when engaging issues of regional style—the peculiar ways that musicians are heard to play their music that are idiomatic to their place of birth or, more recently, adoption.

Carrying all the baggage of a second-generation Irish traditional flute player and a young lifetime of classical music experience, I came to Ireland in 1990 as a research student with a passion to unearth the mysteries I had encountered in my people's music. Through the generosity of communities of musicians in Ireland and beyond, I have since come to conclusions which have led me to rethink what I wanted from this research and question how and why we organize our world of music.

In this session I will introduce what I call the “big-six” regional styles. I will show how they are defined according to exemplary performers and performances but, most importantly illustrate how they have developed and interface with more empirical measures of performance, measured in words for ornamentation, phrasing, variation, articulation, and other aspects of performance.

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1:30 Literature: Cúchulainn as Imperishable Reservoir of Inspiration

In this talk, Réamonn Ó Ciaráin discusses how the mythological figure of Cúchulainn is a potent symbol of bravery, loyalty, martial prowess, beauty, and wisdom. The spirit of Cúchulainn has inspired revolutionaries, artists, sports men and women, and Irish leaders for at least a millennium. Réamonn will demonstrate how Cúchulainn still holds significance for many in the twenty first century. Cúchulainn has been adopted by the Republican tradition of Ireland as a symbol of heroic self-sacrifice for his people and to the Loyalist people of the North, he is the heroic defender Ulster. This talk will be delivered in a narrative style combining a retelling of lesser known Cúchulainn stories with learned and fresh insights. Dara Vallely's paintings will form a background to this presentation and instil a new vitality and depth to these ancient stories. The imagery is original, bold, vibrant, and even tribal.

Réamonn Ó Ciaráin, Armagh, Northern Ireland

Réamonn Ó Ciaráin has spent more than twenty years working with Gael Linn in the promotion of the Irish language. He is author of three books on *Cúchulainn; Laoch na Laochra: Scéal Chúchulainn* (2015), *Cúchulainn, Ulster's Greatest Hero* (2017) and *Cú Uladh, Scéal Chúchulainn* (2018). He is co-founder of *Flash Fiction Armagh* and co-editor of *The Bramley*, an anthology of Flash-Fiction from Armagh. Réamonn was born in Crossmaglen and now lives in Milford near Navan Fort in County Armagh, the centre of power for the Red Branch Heroes of whom Cúchulainn was champion. Réamonn took his primary degree in education with Celtic Studies at St. Mary's University College, Belfast. Following this, he successfully completed a master's degree in Irish Studies at Queen's University Belfast and later a masters in Cultural Management at the University of Ulster. Réamonn is centrally involved in the production of *An tUlach*, Ireland's oldest literary magazine. He has held various officer roles at Armagh County level with the GAA and currently sits on the GAA's national committee for the Irish language. Réamonn is chairperson of Aonach Mhacha, the Irish language social enterprise behind the building of a £2m Irish language Cultural Centre in Armagh City called Aonach Mhacha.

2:30 Archaeology: Early Medieval Settlement in Ireland

The Early Medieval period in Ireland dates from the fifth to the twelfth century AD. In many parts of Europe this period is referred to as the "Dark Ages," whereas for Ireland this was a time when the island came of age. This small island on the periphery of western Europe forged its destiny and announced itself to the world. Since then Ireland has been referred to as "the land of saints and scholars." This legacy has left a lasting mark on our cultural identity and has been memorialized across the landscape of Ireland in the form of archaeological sites. In this talk we will look at the type of sites constructed and lived in by the people of Ireland during the early medieval era. Through this period, crannogs (artificial island dwellings) came to be a common site type in certain areas. A special focus will be drawn to research being undertaken on a crannog that was recently excavated in the north of Ireland.

Marie-Therese Barrett, Queens University Belfast, Northern Ireland

Marie-Therese Barrett is an Archaeology and Paleoecology PhD candidate at Queen's University Belfast. She has been an archaeologist for the past fourteen years. Her primary

research interests are based on the history and archaeology of early medieval settlement in Ireland. Her research also encompasses scientific dating methods, primarily dendrochronology (tree-ring dating). As well as her academic research, Marie-Therese has been a field archaeologist for a number of years and has been involved in a number of early medieval excavations in Ireland. Her doctoral research is focused on using dendrochronology to examine an early medieval crannog (lake dwelling).

3:30 Music: The Noble Strains of the Irish Harp

In ancient Irish legend, the harp of Dagda had three magical properties or “strains” which had the power to evoke different effects on the listener: Suantraigh, or “sleep strain” which lulled people to sleep, Goiltraigh or “sorrow strain,” which caused people to weep and Geantraigh or “joy strain,” which caused people to be merry. This presentation will cover some of the mythology and melodies of the Irish harp that represent these three properties, the lullabies, laments, and lilting dance tunes that remain at the heart of harp traditions today.

Kim Robertson, Milwaukee, Wisconsin

Kim Robertson is a renowned performer, arranger, and recording artist who has stretched the boundaries of the harp for a new generation of performers and audiences. As a pioneer in the American folk harp movement, she combines an improvisational spirit with a passionate sense of tradition, bringing a contemporary touch to a centuries-old instrument. Born in Wisconsin, she is classically trained on piano and orchestral harp. In the mid-70s, Kim's discovery of the Celtic harp grew into a profound love for the instrument, setting her upon the path of exploration for which she is now widely known. Kim has traveled with her harp from concert halls to grass roots folk clubs, from luxury cruise ships to remote mountaintops. She has performed concerts by candlelight, delivered singing telegrams and played herself on an episode of *Beverly Hills 90210*. She regularly tours the USA, Canada, and Europe, and is still recognized as one of the most popular Celtic harpists performing today. Her work encompasses numerous recording projects, published harp arrangements, and an international itinerary of workshops and retreats.

4:30 Book Launch: *Renaissance Galway, Delineating the Seventeenth-Century City*

Paul Walsh, National Monuments Service Ireland, author; Jennifer Moore, Royal Irish Academy, Dublin, Ireland; and Marcy Bidney, American Geographical Society Collection at UW-Milwaukee

Milwaukee Irish Fest invites the public to attend the launch of the newly-released historical work *Renaissance Galway*. The subject of the book is the remarkable “pictorial map” of Galway, which was produced in the mid-seventeenth century. It offers a bird’s eye view of Galway city at this time and presents insights into the cultural, sociopolitical and religious outlook of the local ruling elite—the so-called “tribes” of Galway. Originally intended as a wall hanging, it was produced to impress and remains a centerpiece of Galway’s visual history. Only two copies of the original printed map are known to exist and it is the well-preserved version from Trinity College, Dublin that is reproduced in this book. The book presents carefully selected extracts from the pictorial map, each accompanied by a commentary. These range from descriptions of particular buildings or areas, to aspects of everyday life that are revealed in the map. In an

introductory essay, the author ponders the many mysteries that continue to surround the pictorial map of Galway—its origins, compilers, and purpose. Together the map extracts and accompanying texts offer a new perspective—a window into the culture and mindset of Galway’s mid-seventeenth century ruling Catholic elite. The modern viewer is invited to inhabit the world of Renaissance Galway.