



Centre *news*

December 2022 *No. 25*

WELCOME TO THE DECEMBER 2022 EDITION OF THE CENTRE FOR IRISH-GERMAN STUDIES NEWSLETTER

It is a nice coincidence to have the 25th newsletter when we are celebrating the first quarter century of the Centre for Irish-German Studies. We have put together a brochure that gives an overview of many of our activities, which is accessible on our website (see <https://ulsites.ul.ie/irishgerman/sites/default/files/25%20years%20CIGS%20Brochure%20September%202022.pdf>) – when you have a spare moment during the Christmas break it might be of interest. We also marked this very special year for the Centre with our 19th international conference in September, entitled “1997-2022: Reflecting – Connecting – Transforming – In Honour of Prof Joachim Fischer”. It was a joyous event with stimulating and interesting papers and the joint founder of the Centre, Prof Joachim Fischer, was appropriately celebrated. The keynote address was given by Irish Minister of State for European Affairs Thomas Byrne, T.D. and the welcome address by German Minister of State Katja Keul. Moreover, we were delighted to receive a lovely message from Irish President Michael D. Higgins, saying that the Centre “has contributed so much to the reputation of the University of Limerick and the education and development of so many students. May I join with those students, past and present, in wishing you a most successful Conference, and every success as the Centre continues to grow and flourish, playing its important role in the life of the University of Limerick”. Thanks to all supporters and contributors over the years and let’s keep up the good work.

We are wishing everyone a truly merry and healthy Christmas / *Gesegnete Weihnachten und einen guten Rutsch* / Nollaig Shona!



Centre for Irish-German Studies
Ionad an Léinn Gaeilge-Ghearmánaigh

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PEOPLE

We are delighted to welcome several new members of Centre for Irish-German Studies. An excellent collaboration has already started with **Prof Dr Michelle Witen** at the Europa Universität Flensburg. Prof Dr Witen has been Junior Professor of English and Irish literature at the Europa-Universität Flensburg since September 2019. She was awarded her BA and MA at the University of Western Ontario, her DPhil by the University of Oxford, and her postdoc by the University of Basel. Her research areas focus on the 19th, 20th, and 21st centuries, and she has published extensively on Modernism



Prof Dr Michelle Witen



Natascha Guggi

(especially on James Joyce), music and literature, the non-human, Lewis Carroll, and Victorian periodicals. She is the director of the EUF Centre for Irish Studies, which is set to open in 2023. Both Prof Gisela Holfter and Prof Joachim Fischer will be members of the external *Beirat*. The inaugural conference of the Centre will take place 15-16 June 2023.

At the University of Limerick we have also grown, notably in the form of not just one, but several new additions to our team. A key addition is in fact an old hand – **Natascha Guggi**, who became a CIGS

member soon after coming to Limerick as the Austrian Lektor via the OeAD in 2017. Since then her enthusiasm, knowledge and especially technical expertise has been much appreciated at many events, whether our international conferences or guest lectures. She has now become the research assistant of the Centre thanks to a DAAD-funded project running until the end of 2024 (see below). She is also a PhD student, working on her research project entitled *Europe in Foreign Language Teaching: A comparative study of the implementation of European Studies in foreign language teaching in secondary schools in Austria, Germany and Ireland* under the supervision of Prof Jean Conacher, Prof Joachim Fischer and Prof Christian Fandrych (Leipzig).

Natascha's successor as the new Austrian lecturer **Alexandra Zach** also joined the Centre after coming to the University of Limerick this September. She has already been contributing to a number of Centre activities since then, proving to be an indispensable support. Be it our Anniversary Conference or a presentation on German Christmas traditions at Limerick's Hunt Museum, she was always ready to support actively. Alexandra Zach hails from the city of Wels in Upper Austria and studied Spanish and German in Graz. After her graduation, she gathered experience working as a German teacher, both at grammar school level and for a private language school.



Alexandra Zach

*Dominik Kohl*

Also in September we were happy to welcome **Dominik Kohl**, our new DAAD teaching assistant, who is working both with us and UL's German Section. We thank him very much for his ongoing support in organising and documenting the Centre's various activities as well as helping with research connected to current DAAD projects. Dominik Kohl studied German literature at the universities of Regensburg and Heidelberg and, before coming to Limerick, has spent time abroad in Japan and the People's Republic of China. He is

succeeding our previous DAAD teaching assistant Alberta Tagliacozzo, who was the first part-time appointee at the Centre.

We are happy to welcome **Ywana Höffle**, the most recent arrival, and our new intern at the Centre for Irish-German Studies, whom we have had the pleasure to host since November. She has been providing input to a number of activities already and is a great help with managing the Centre's book collection at UL's Glucksman Library. This is in addition to supporting selected research projects and general organisational matters. Ywana Höffle is studying at Saarland University in Saarbrücken to be a teacher in English and Philosophy. She enjoys dancing and plays the piano.

*Ywana Höffle*

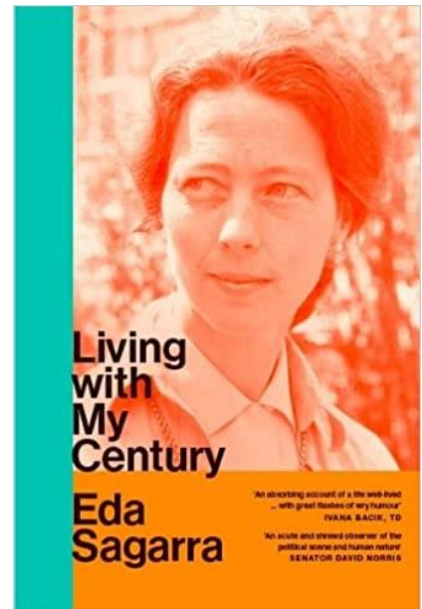


H.E. Cord Meier-Klodt (German Ambassador to Ireland) with Dr Axel Klein (on the right)

In May, our member **Dr Axel Klein** was awarded an Honorary Doctorate by the National University of Ireland in recognition of his outstanding research on Irish musical history. His study *Die Musik Irlands im 20. Jahrhundert* (Hildesheim 1996) was the first study, in any language, of the history of Irish art music in the twentieth century. There have been many books published by him since. The occasion has been captured on the following link: <http://ow.ly/uHNN50JaTlO>.

Prof **Eda Sagarra's** wonderful memoir

'Living with My Century' was launched by TCD Chancellor and former president Mary McAleese in June. Eda is emeritus Professor of German at Trinity College Dublin; she was the first female Registrar in any university between Ireland and Great Britain from 1981 to 1986 and held the position of Professor of German from 1975 to 1998. She was also our first Adjunct Professor of the Centre for Irish-German Studies and we are proud to call her a long-time friend and mentor. The book can be ordered here https://www.lilliputpress.ie/author_post/eda-sagarra.



Cover image of Prof Eda Sagarra's recent memoir

Chiara Harrison Lambe is an incoming PhD student who will be co-supervised by Prof Gesa Stedman (Centre for British Studies, HU), Prof Eva Ehninger (HU Berlin) and Prof Gisela Holfter. Born in Dublin and raised in New York, she is the winner of the Sarah Cecilia Harrison Essay Prize 2022 with her essay *A Name To Remember*, seeking to ascertain why Irish-Jewish painter and printmaker Stella Steyn (1907-1987), one of the earliest illustrators of James Joyce's *Finnegans Wake* and the only Irish artist known to have studied at the Bauhaus School in Germany, rarely appears in accounts of significant 20th-century Irish artists. Harrison Lambe will continue to pursue her research in the department of Art and Visual History at Humboldt University in Berlin.



Chiara Harrison Lambe; Photo ©Maxwell Photography, Mark Maxwell, courtesy of the National Gallery of Ireland.

The 31st Freudenstadt Symposium on European Regionalism ‘Mastering the “Penta-Challenge”: Rising from the 5-fold crisis’ took place on 1-3 July 2022 in Freudenstadt, Black Forest, Germany. This year’s themes, in abbreviated form, were: 1) Europe in motion - Is solidarity, standing in for values, protecting ourselves jointly against crisis only a snapshot, or will it persist? 2) Regions in motion - how do these challenges materialize and affect Europe’s regions? 3) Mastering the penta-challenge – what does it take to recover, economically, just and fair, with a Europe that is resilient in many

dimensions? Why is energy and climate action the key? CIGS was happy to support this event and our member **Dr Patricia Conlan** was one of the co-organisers.

Visitors to the Centre for Irish-German Studies



Martine and Albrecht Wagner, Gerti Wihrhein and Herbert Steiner in Castleconnell

Apart from these new members and incoming PhD students, we were happy to meet many familiar or new faces as visitors to the Centre over the course of this year, strengthening our connections with the many wonderful people involved in enduring Irish-German relations. Among them was **Prof Albrecht Wagner**, renowned

physicist and son of German author, radio and film producer Margit Wagner who had a huge impact on the German perception of Ireland in the 1950s and later. He visited in the summer of 2022 together with his partner Martine and friends Prof Herbert Steiner (Berkeley) and Gerti Wihrhein (Linz) and also got to explore some of the surroundings such as Castleconnell. We are currently exploring options to show some of Margit Wagner's fascinating films about Ireland from the 1950s and 1960s.

We were also delighted to welcome **René Böll**, the German artist and co-founder of the Heinrich Böll Foundation, and **Jan Philipp Albrecht**, the Foundation's president, taking office in the summer of 2022. The visit included a meeting with Green party TD Brian Leddin. It is hoped that there will be some joint endeavours with the Böll Foundation, specifically in the context of topics such as sustainability and the environment. Given that our very first conference in 1997 was a joint endeavour with the Foundation, it seems about time to renew the cooperation.



René Böll, Tommy Simpson and Jan Philipp Albrecht in front of Plassey House



Dian and Monica Schefold

Special friends of the Centre **Monica and Dian Schefold** also paid a visit to the Centre in September, taking in impressions of the university's American Collection of Irish art exhibited at Plassey House. Monica Schefold, daughter of distinguished scholar and 'father' of Irish-German Studies, John Hennig, was delighted to come across works by Anne Yeats with whom she had art classes. Monica later became an art teacher and graphic artist herself and has done much to further Irish-German friendship in Bremen with her husband, eminent legal scholar Prof Dian Schefold.

Further guests included **Peter and Joan Brück**, who visited the Centre in early October. Prof Peter Brück is professor emeritus of University College Cork, having lectured at the School of Biological, Earth and Environmental Sciences. His father Hermann Brück came to Ireland in 1947, invited by Eamon de Valera, to become director of Dunsink Observatory (leaving ten years later for Edinburgh to take up the position as Astronomer Royal for Scotland).



Joan and Peter Brück

PAST EVENTS & PROJECTS

Dännerstag & Féile Dännerstag

Launched in 2021, translational poetry project *Dännerstag* was arguably one of the most integrative projects we have had over the last years, bringing together German poetry readings with their translations into English and Irish. Funded by the German, Austrian and Swiss Embassies, the DAAD and, in part, by Foras na Gaeilge, the project aimed to explore and deepen the cultural and linguistic links between Germany and Ireland, publishing subtitled videos of poetry readings online on our website. The project's name *Dännerstag* is derived from the Irish word 'dán', meaning 'poem', and the German word 'Donnerstag' ('Thursday').



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Having seen a delightfully diverse array of contributions, the project continued to introduce a new contemporary poem, read by its author, for every month since its conception before finally concluding in May 2022. Alongside these were recitals of classical German poems read out by various members and friends of the Centre. This year's contributions featured Semier Insayif's poem *ich dir* (January), Kerstin Hensel's *Meine Welt* (February), Gabrielle Alioth's *Bitte (Achaini)* in March, Nadja Küchenmeister's *Staub* (April) and René Böll's *Cillíní* to mark the finale of the programme. All of these videos, including the classical readings, are free to watch online: <https://ulsites.ul.ie/irishgerman/d%C3%A1nnerstag#>.

With the support of Foras na Gaeilge, the Directors of Dánnerstag Prof Gisela Holfter and Dr Sorcha de Brún were very happy to announce the launch of follow-up project *Féile Dánnerstag* in the autumn semester. Foras na Gaeilge's funding of the project was significant in the context of Irish-German studies as well as in the burgeoning fields of literary translation and literary studies. In contrast to the first manifestation of Dánnerstag which comprised the translation of German poetry to Irish (and English), *Féile Dánnerstag* had as its primary objective the translation of contemporary Irish poetry to German and English. In addition to the multilingualism which is of intrinsic importance to the *Féile Dánnerstag* concept, all four poetry events for *Féile Dánnerstag* were staged and performed in the University of Limerick from September through to December, starting off with the personal and evocative poetry of Gabriel Rosenstock and his translator Hans-Christian Oeser as a pre-programme to our 25th Anniversary Conference on 22 September (for more details and a photo please see below page 19).

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Subsequently, Féile Dánnerstag hosted poetry events with Prof Alan Titley, Julie Field (aka Julie Goo) and Micheál Ó hAodha. On



October 11, Prof Alan Titley read a selection of poems to students and staff in the congenial surroundings of the Board Room in Plassey House. A renowned scholar of modern Irish, Prof Titley's Irish language poetry and English translations ranged across a

selection of topics, encompassing themes such as global politics and highlighting the potential of poetry to give a voice to the powerless. German translations were by Dr Angelika Hansert, a lecturer on the European Studies Programme in the University of Limerick. Féile Dánnerstag Number Three took place in the atmospheric surroundings of Theatre 1 of the Irish World Academy when Irish language, singer and spoken word/slam poet Julie Goo (aka Julie Field) performed her work to original tracks by DJ Mike Milis. A joint event and collaboration between the Centre for Irish German Studies, the Centre for the Study of Popular Music and Popular Culture and Aonad na Gaeilge, stage design played an important part in this Féile Dánnerstag event, where a variety of lighting was used for each of Julie's poems to fully realize the emotional and performative aspect of this artist's work and to compliment the funky music of DJ Milis. Members of the Centre for Irish-German Studies read the poems in German translation to an enthralled audience of staff and students, among them Dominik Kohl, Prof Gisela Holfter, Dr Marieke Krajenbrink and Dr Sorcha de Brún. Translations into English of Field's poems were by Dr Sorcha de Brún, and German translations by Dr Angelika Hansert. Julie's performance at Féile Dánnerstag concluded with a thought-provoking interview with questions by Prof Eoin Devereux of the Centre for the Study of Popular Music and Popular Culture.

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The final instalment of the Irish-German poetry festival on December 1 saw the festival and its faithful followers return once again to the halcyon environs of the Board Room, where poet and translator Dr Micheál Ó hAodha of the Glucksman Library read his poetry in Irish and English. Ó hAodha's moving poems on life and loss were followed by Prof Gisela Holfter's readings of Eva Bourke's excellent German translations, a sparkling performance from Dr Diane Daly and student Anna Mitchell, and singing in Irish from Dr



Féile Dánnerstag directors Prof Gisela Holfter and Dr Sorcha de Brún

Sorcha de Brún. As described by funders Foras na Gaeilge, Féile Dánnerstag was a “resounding success”, and an example of the outstanding academic collaboration for which CIGS is known and which is consistently moving the field of Irish-German studies forward. We wish to thank all collaborators and especially Aonad na Gaeilge, Ciara Considine and Dr Deirdre Ní Loingsigh for their ongoing support of Féile Dánnerstag. We hope to build on this wonderful success and continue with the project in some

form next year, so watch this space for further news! *Go raibh míle maith agaibh go léir!*

Sorcha de Brún

Limericker Literaturgespräche

We were more than happy to include several new editions of our treasured literature series *Limericker Literaturgespräche* (Limerick Literature Talks), one of our longest-running projects, in our 2022 calendar and to listen to some new and some familiar voices over from the German-speaking world.



Torsten Schulz with DAAD teaching assistant Alberta Tagliacozzo (middle) and CIGS intern Lea Döhms (University of Mainz, on the right;)

On 2 and 3 March 2022, German writer **Torsten Schulz** visited and introduced us to his 2004 novel *Boxhagener Platz*, which was also adapted for the cinema in 2010. The plot, set in 1960s' East Berlin, traces the steps of Otilie 'Otti' Henschel and her grandson Holger through a succession of everyday adventures and misunderstandings. There were animated discussions with different student groups, a presentation of the film and also a fascinating conversation between Dr Christiane Schönfeld (CIGS member and Head of German, Mary Immaculate College) and Torsten Schulz. The event was supported by the Centre stage programme of the DAAD, and organised together with the Goethe Institute (where

Torsten Schulz had a double act with Irish writer John Banville), University of Galway and Mary Immaculate College Limerick.

Following shortly afterwards, on 7 March, we welcomed German writer Renate Ahrens who has often covered Irish-German

themes thanks to her previous long residence in Ireland. In *Schicksalsfreundin*, her most recent novel, she details the



Renate Ahrens and Prof Alan Kramer

friendship of Miriam and Zofia and the trials they face following a shocking revelation, which exposes their own family histories to be inextricably linked with the great historical crises of the previous century. Renate Ahrens has been a welcome guest in UL on several occasions.

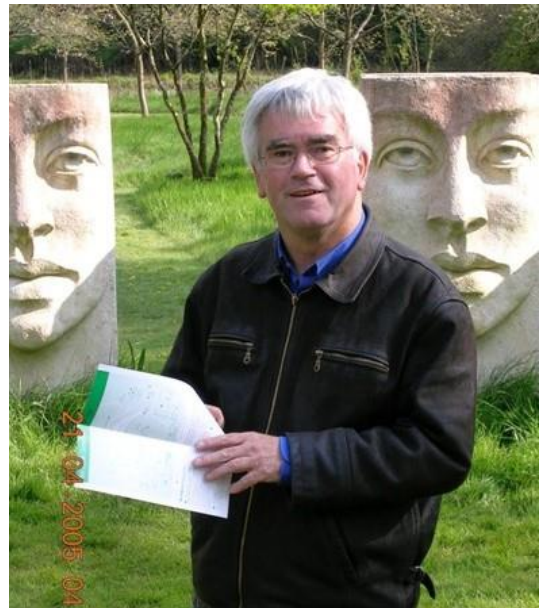
Towards the end of the month, on 28 March 2022, **Gabrielle Alioth** completed our literary trio, reading from *Die Überlebenden*, her careful examination of a Swiss family's post-war memory, trauma and guilt. Following Mina's, Max's and Vera's attempts to come to terms with their past and the lasting influence of their father or grandfather, respectively, they set out on a painful journey to reconcile not just themselves but the stories of where they come from. Gabrielle Alioth has been a collaborator of ours on several occasions and has also featured in the Irish-German poetry project *Dännerstag*. Her reading was organised in cooperation with the Swiss Embassy and the German section and introduced by Dr Marieke Krajenbrink.



Gabrielle Alioth

**International Conference “*Mein Sehnen geht in die Ferne*” –
*Reflecting on Exile and GDR Studies. In memoriam of Ian Wallace, 9-11 September***

New College Oxford was the beautiful setting in September 2022 for a conference in memory of Professor Ian Wallace (1943-2021). Organised by Professor Karen Leeder, University of Oxford, Professor Gisela Holfter, University of Limerick, and Professor Pól Ó Dochartaigh, University of Galway, the conference papers encompassed two of Ian’s major research interests: exile studies and GDR studies.



Prof Ian Wallace

Pól Ó Dochartaigh opened the first panel on Friday afternoon with a paper on the difficulties involved in negotiating Jewish Communist identity in the GDR. The second paper, delivered by Gisela Holfter, provided an overview of Ireland’s long history of immigration before focussing on several German refugees who made Ireland their home at least temporarily: these included Karl von Metzradt who founded a school in Tinakilly, Co. Wicklow, Aga Müller who became a journalist for the *Irish Press*, and renowned uileann pipe-maker Andreas Rogge. In the final paper of the panel, Aoife Ní Chroidheáin explored the East German *samizdat* scene, taking as her case study *ariadnefabrik*, the literary magazine founded by Rainer Schedlinski and Andreas Koziol in 1986.

In the second session of the afternoon, former colleagues and friends paid tribute to Ian. Axel Goodbody and Dennis Tate, his



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colleagues at the University of Bath, emphasised the importance of *GDR Monitor*, founded by Ian in 1979. They recalled his central role in organising the conference “Geist und Macht: Writers and the State in the GDR”, which was the first UK-based conference in GDR studies and took place at the University of Bath in 1991. Anthony Grenville spoke about Ian’s many years of involvement in the International Feuchtwanger Society, while Marje Schuetze-Coburn, Secretary of the Society, and its Treasurer Michaela Ullmann recalled Ian’s commitment to the Society and his trips to the Feuchtwanger Memorial Library at the University of Southern California. Ian’s son Danny moved listeners with his deeply personal and poignant tribute to a wonderful father. Day one concluded with the launch of *Great Fugue* (Smokestack Books), a translation by Karen Leeder and David Constantine of Volker Braun’s *Große Fuge*; this was followed by dinner in Founders Library.

Jennifer Taylor opened the second day of the conference with a talk on the West German publicist Andreas Wolfgang Mytze, drawing particular attention to the journal *Europäische Ideen* which he founded in 1973 and of which he was editor. His theatre reviews of the 1970s introduced the repertoire of East German theatres to readers in West Germany and Switzerland. In her paper, Dr. Deirdre Byrnes (University of Galway) on the reception of Seán O’Casey in the GDR demonstrated how the breadth of Seán O’Casey’s dramatic oeuvre found lasting expression on the GDR stage. Hilary Potter began the second panel with an imaginative re-examination of Ingeborg Hunzinger’s sculpture ensemble *Block der Frauen* (a memorial to the Rosenstraße protest of 1943) through the medium of photographs in a box. Conference participants worked in groups,

interacting with and curating photographs of the installation. In her paper, Charmian Brinson considered the return from British exile of Communist refugees to the Soviet zone of Germany/GDR, a return which was often marked by disillusion and disappointment.



Trudy Wallace

After lunch in the Hall of New College, Trudy Wallace, née Breitenmoser, led a walk around Oxford. What more fitting way to end a conference in memory of a much-loved and much-respected colleague and friend than to walk through the town where Ian had studied Modern Languages at St. Peter's College and where he had met his beloved wife Trudy five decades previously.

Deirdre Byrnes, University of Galway

25th Anniversary Conference of the Centre for Irish-German Studies 1997-2022: Reflecting – Connecting – Transforming. In Honour of Joachim Fischer, 22-23 September 2022

In the same year the University of Limerick is celebrating the 50th year of its foundation, the Centre for Irish-German Studies, too, has had much reason to take a closer look at its own eventful past. Conceived of a quarter of a century ago as a forum to facilitate and coordinate research and exchange between Ireland and the German-speaking world, the Centre has, over the years, seen a richness, depth and variety of contributions that gives reason to feeling both grateful and confident to continue what it set out for. 25 years after commencing its work, the Centre was thus honoured

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to host the 19th edition of its conference series on Irish-German Studies, welcoming guests from both Ireland and abroad, showcasing the many facets of a tradition of research that, in its 25th year, proved to be very much alive to the complex shared realities we inhabit.

Following a festive pre-programme reception in Plassey House



At the reception in Plassey House: Dr Diane Daly, Prof Gisela Holfter, Dr Sorcha de Brún, Deirdre Ní Loingsigh, Hans Christian Oeser, Gabriel Rosenstock and Ciara Considine

which saw the launch of the *Féile Dánerstag* project with an Irish-language poetry reading by Gabriel Rosenstock, its German-language translations by Hans Christian Oeser and music played by Dr Diane Daly of the Irish Chamber Orchestra, the conference was formally opened by Prof Kerstin Mey (President, UL) and Prof Gisela

Holfter, the Centre's director. Keynote addresses by Irish Minister of State for European Affairs Thomas Byrne, T.D., and Katja Keul, Minister of State in the German Department of Foreign Affairs, were further complemented by a message from Irish President Michael D. Higgins (cf. *Welcome* section of this newsletter), which the Centre was more than delighted to receive.

Building on these introductory remarks, a roundtable chaired by Prof Eda Sagarra (TCD) proceeded to discuss *The Next 25 Years* and the future of German Studies in Ireland. The insightful observations shared by Prof Emer O'Sullivan (Lüneburg), H. E.

Cord Meier-Klodt (German Ambassador, Dublin) and Eimear Murphy (Brussels) succinctly framed the bigger picture of language study in Ireland before the conference moved on to its matters of research and study.

In a first thematic block, Prof Tom Cosgrove (UL), Dr Felix Morgenstern (Graz) and Dr Jérôme aan de Wiel (UCC) presented various perspectives on *Irish-German Connections in Music, Photography and Film*, chaired by Dr Hermann Rasche (University of Galway). Whereas Dr Morgenstern focussed on the musical interconnections between Ireland and the German-speaking world, Dr aan de Wiel gave an impression of the Irish aid to Germany and Austria after the Second World War. Prof Cosgrove (UL) afterwards introduced the film *Generate the State* (2015) about the Irish Shannon Scheme.

The evening was dedicated to literature again, and to one very special participant in the event. After Hugo Hamilton reading from his latest novel *The Pages* and Gabriel Rosenstock, Hans Christian Oeser and Eva Bourke reciting their poetry and its translation,



Prof Joachim Fischer speaking at the festive evening dinner.

the Conference Dinner saw a warm, heartfelt and well-earned presentation dedicated to the Centre's co-instigator, deputy director and long-time contributor, Prof Joachim Fischer (UL), in whose honour the conference was being held.

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The second day continued seamlessly from the engaging thematic proposals of the previous one, with both guests and members of the Centre providing a selected insight into their fields of interest. The morning discussions alone, expanding on *Facets of Irish-German Studies* (chaired by Dr Veronica O'Regan, UL), *The Irish Language and Irish-German Studies* (chaired by Prof Meidhbhín Ní Úrdail, UCD) and *Irish-German Studies as European Literary Studies* provided much food for thought. In the course of the presentations, the conference attendees welcomed, consecutively, Dr Claire O'Reilly (UCC) presenting on Charlotte von der Schulenberg's personal letters from Ireland (1956-83), Dr Deirdre Byrnes (University of Galway) on Seán O'Casey's relationship to the GDR and Prof Edward Moxon-Browne (UL) on German tourist perceptions of Ireland before the pandemic, which gave reason for more than just one benign laugh.

After a short coffee break, these deliberations were continued with presentations by Prof David Stifter (NUI Maynooth) on the role



From left to right: H.E. Cord Meier-Klodt (German Ambassador to Ireland), Prof Kerstin Mey (President, UL), Thomas Byrne (T.D., Irish Minister of State for European Affairs), Prof Gisela Holfter and Prof Joachim Fischer.

of German-speaking scholars in Celtic Studies, Prof Ruairí Ó hUiginn (DIAS) on reminiscences of Celtic Studies in Bonn in the 1980s and Kate Uí Chiobháin (Galway) introducing her research on German aspects in Irish-language travel writing. These were promptly followed by Prof Hedwig Schwall (Leuven) looking back on 25 years of the EFACIS (European

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Federation of Associations and Centres of Irish Studies) programme and Natascha Gugli (UL) introducing her PhD research project on European Studies as represented in foreign language curricula in schools in Austria, Germany and Ireland.

The second afternoon then, chaired by Prof Christiane Schönfeld (MIC), addressed *Irish-German Studies as European Literary Studies*, an ample field pictured vividly by Dr Fergal Lenehan (Jena) and Dr Sabine Egger (MIC) in some of its various aspects. Dr Lenehan's remarks on literary Europeanism and representing the European Federalist in Colm Tóibín and Bernhard Setzwein alongside Dr Egger's exploration of dance as a way to explore narrative memory spaces in Katja Petrowskaja and Anna Burns thus proved an important addition to earlier considerations.

In the end, rejoining the many threads that ran through two full days of intellectual exchange, Prof Jürgen Barkhoff (TCD), Dr Anita Barmettler (UL), Prof Jean Conacher (UL) and Prof Caitríona Ní Dhúill (UCC) joined a panel discussion on *The Future of German Studies in Ireland*. This was chaired by Dr Marieke Krajenbrink (UL), stressing, like Prof Joachim Fischer and Prof Gisela Holfter in their own concluding remarks, the necessity to both look back at the past and ever forward into a future in which studying, and through study appreciating, the intricacies, challenges and more often than not unsuspected connections that lie in inter- and transcultural relations, that will surely continue to surprise and inspire.

Dominik Kohl

International Conference *New Ways of Engagement and the International Context: Northern Ireland and Ireland*, 3-4 November 2022

Ulster University, recently played host to an international social policy conference examining *New Ways of Engagement and the International: Northern Ireland and Ireland* organised in

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coordination with the Centre for Irish-German Studies, UL and the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung (KAS). Ulster University Vice Chancellor Professor Paul Bartholomew welcomed delegates to the conference which was held at Clifton House in Belfast, alongside other dignitaries including the Lord Mayor of Belfast, Councillor Christina Black; the German Ambassador to Ireland, His



At Ulster University (from left to right): Prof Paul Carmichael (Ulster University), Mariko Higuchi (German Embassy London), H. E. Ambassador Cord Meier-Klodt, Lord Mayor of Belfast Councillor Christina Black, Prof Gisela Holfter, Ulster University Vice Chancellor Prof Paul Bartholomew and Matthias Barner (KAS).

Excellency Cord Meier-Klodt and Mariko Higuchi, Deputy Head of Department for Economic and Global Affairs, German Embassy London and joint organisers Prof Gisela Holfter and Katie O'Connor and Matthias Barner (KAS). Host Prof Paul Carmichael, Professor of Public Policy/Government

at Ulster University's Faculty of Arts Humanities and Social Sciences, provided an excellent set-up for the two-day event. The conference's programme focused on three aspects: 1) A consideration of the relationship between Northern Ireland and Ireland in the context of Partition and a century of separate development, including reflections on the Irish situation in comparative international perspective; 2) an analysis of attitudes to Northern Ireland and Ireland, within both jurisdictions and from the UK, including in literary representations of change. And 3) an

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exploration of the development of key public policy and services in Ireland and Northern Ireland, and of the extent of cross-border co-operation as well as their co-production and co-delivery. It was truly an excellent event with thought-provoking contributions on cross-border relations, health, housing, social care, education and the environment North and South as well as discussion of identity questions, including wonderful readings by Jan Carson (Belfast) and Donal Ryan (Limerick).

Speakers and guests included Anthony Soares, Director Centre for Cross-Border Studies, Anthony Harbinson, Northern Ireland Board Member for the Food Standards Agency, and the Chair of the NI Food Advisory Council, Mark Hanniffy and Richard Hill, Joint Secretaries to the North South Ministerial Council and consultant Caitriona Mullan. Academics included Prof Paddy Gray, Prof Anne-



From left to right: Prof Paul Carmichael, Prof Gisela Holfter and Matthias Barner, KAS

Marie Gray (UU), Prof Joachim Fischer, Prof Liam Murray, Dr Bernadette Connaughton (UL), Prof Jon Tonge (Liverpool), Prof David Phinnemore (QUB), Prof Katy Hayward (QUB), Prof Pól Ó Dochartaigh (Galway), Prof Gesa Stedman (GBZ Humboldt, Berlin). It also ended on a high point with concluding roundtable on 'New Ways

of Engagement' with Claire Hanna (SDLP), Ian Paisley (DUP), Charles Flanagan (Fine Gael), John Gormley (former leader Green Party), Declan Kearney (Sinn Féin) and Sorcha Eastwood (Alliance).

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The conference was the second of its kind, following the first held in Limerick last year, and represents cross-border cooperation between Ulster University and University of Limerick, in partnership with the KAS. The book containing selected papers of the 2021 Limerick conference and invited contributions was published in time for the Belfast event. The peer-reviewed volume, edited by Paul Carmichael and Gisela Holfter, is entitled “Unions, Break-Ups and Special Relationships: Aspects of Irish-German-UK Relations” (Trier: WVT, 2022) and was launched by H.E. Cord Meier-Klodt German Ambassador to Ireland during the conference dinner.



The focus of this volume is the triangular relationship between Germany, Ireland and the UK in the aftermath of Brexit. The collection offers an interdisciplinary approach to considering various cultural and political facets of relations between the three countries, covering different perspectives, issues and the opportunities which arise. The book contains fifteen chapters, organised into two main sections. The first part of the volume is entitled ‘Academia and Languages: British-German Relations and British Studies in Germany/German Studies in the UK as well as

Irish-German Relations and German Studies in Ireland and Irish Studies in Germany’. It maps the respective areas of German, Irish and British Studies in the different constituencies and increased focus on respective bilateral relations. The second part is entitled ‘Reflecting Europe and the European Union in Ireland North and South after Brexit, (Re-)Unification in the Past and in the Future and the Situation in Northern Ireland’. Contributors include Matthias Barner, Paul Carmichael, John Coakley, Oran Doyle,

Joachim Fischer, Paul Gillespie, Marius Guderjan, Katy Hayward, Gisela Holfter, Marieke Krajenbrink, James W. McAuley, Nicola McLelland, Edward Moxon-Browne, Pól Ó Dochartaigh, Jürgen Pelzer, Katharina Rennhak and Gesa Stedman.

Heinrich Böll and James Joyce – Outsiders, Insiders, Europeans; a panel discussion at Museum of Literature Ireland, 30 November 2022

On the 2022 Irish-German literary calendar, two dates stood out particularly. 100 years ago, James Joyce's groundbreaking novel *Ulysses* was first published in Paris on the day of his 40th birthday and, 50 years later, Heinrich Böll received the Nobel Prize for his sensitive contributions to renewing German literature. This panel discussion, hosted at the Museum of Literature Ireland (MoLI) in Dublin, explored the parallels between these two seminal figures in a shared European literary history – both writing about Ireland, but at different times and at a remove from their home countries. The themes of pan-continental perspectives, countries before and after war in Europe, and the romantic and anti-romantic tendencies of the rural and the urban environment were explored in a discussion



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among H.E. Cord Meier-Klodt (stepping in at short notice for Minister for Finance), Prof Gisela Holfter (Centre for Irish-German Studies, UL), Prof Anne Fogarty (University College Dublin) and Claire-Louise Bennett (author), chaired by Simon O'Connor, director of MoLI.

A Day of Austrian, German and Irish Music, Literature and Culture, 1 December 2022

If you wanted to get in the mood for Christmas and have some mulled wine at the University of Limerick on the 1st of December 2022, you had two options. You could either visit the lively UL Christmas market taking place right in the middle of the campus or you could attend *A Day of Austrian, German and Irish Music, Literature and Culture*, organised by the Centre for Irish-German



The audience at Plassey House. In front: H.E. Dr Thomas Nader and Prof Eda Sagarra.

Studies in cooperation with the Austrian Embassy and the Irish Chamber Orchestra (ICO) on the very same day. For friends of the Centre, however, the choice was an easy one to make.

Introduced by an official reception in UL's very own White House, the Plassey House, the day was cut out to celebrate the rich connections

between three European nations and the cultures of music and literature transporting them. Following festive opening addresses by Prof Kerstin Mey (President, UL), H. E. Dr Thomas Nader, Austrian Ambassador to Ireland, and Prof Gisela Holfter, the final

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edition of *Féile Dánnertag* poetry project saw Irish-language poet Micheál ÓhAodha (UL) read out his poems, accompanied by English and German translations, provided by Irish-German poet and member of Aosdána, Eva Bourke. Dr Diane Daly (ICO) and MA student Anna Mitchell complemented this reading with two formidable Mozart string duets while Dr Sorcha de Brún (UL) gave a captivating demonstration of Irish sean nós singing.

A short tour of Plassey House and the collection of paintings that it holds was then followed by presentations and a panel discussion *On Irish-German and Irish-Austrian cultural exchange: Reflections on study abroad then and now* by those who know best, having lived, promoted and enriched this exchange



Sharing treasured memories: Prof. Joachim Fischer, Prof. Eda Sagarra and Dr Hermann Rasche

themselves through long years. Prof Eda Sagarra (TCD), Dr Hermann Rasche (Galway) and Prof Joachim Fischer (UL) each gave an account of their own experiences with student exchange between Ireland, Austria and Germany, highlighting its many advantages and stressing the historic cornerstone set by programmes like ERASMUS.

After a subsequent coffee break and stroll across the campus Christmas Market, attendees of the event were shown around the Centre book holdings by Ken Bergin, director of the Special Collections in the UL Glucksman Library. The next part of the

programme was streamed and focussed on Austrian-Irish links past and present, chaired by CIGS member and Head of German in UL, Dr Marieke Krajenbrink. On this occasion, Dr Declan Downey (RAH, UCD, President of the Irish-Austrian Society) set out on a *Tour d'Horizon of Irish-Austrian Historical Engagement*, delineating the intricacies of Irish involvement in continental European politics both comprehensively and in accurate detail. Afterwards, Paul Dubsky, former President of the Irish-Austrian Society, gave an overview of the longstanding Society's history, from its conception to recent developments and initiatives. The outcome was a depiction of a rich heritage, to which H. E. Dr Thomas Nadler added a contemporary view and compared the Irish and Austrian situation, drawing on his own extensive experience, having been appointed twice as Austrian Ambassador to Ireland.

The Glucksman Library setting was also where Thomas Zehetmair, as Principal Conductor and partner of the Irish Chamber Orchestra, directed the attendees' attention towards the grand finale of the evening, due to take place in UL's prestigious Concert Hall, by providing explanations to the fascinating and rich background of the night's concert. Before the crowd gathered for this occasion, however, there was another opportunity to meet, mingle and socialize at the event's celebratory dinner at Allegro Café – and, at long last, to enjoy some



Thomas Zehetmair giving a demonstration at the A&L Goodbody Moot Appellate Court at Glucksman Library.



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Austrian mulled wine (sponsored by the Irish Austrian Society) in the company of friends and colleagues.

The ICO, conducted by Zehetmair, afterwards marked the special end of a very special day with a riveting rendition of two Mozart symphonies embracing a less known yet highly expressive violin concert by K. A. Hartmann (1905-1963), written in 1936 to protest against the Nazi regime. On this note, the successful event was not just a day of enjoying Austrian, German and Irish music, literature and culture but also a day both of remembrance and a shared sense of responsibility for everybody.

Dominik Kohl

Lectures & Presentations

There were also many lectures and presentations, both by Centre members and our esteemed guests, running through the past year and providing many insights and new ideas for further projects.

On 24 March 2022, Centre member **Dr Fergal Lenehan** (Jena) and **Dr Roman Lietz** (Mainz, Germersheim) gave a virtual presentation on *Postdigital Cosmopolitanism: Theoretical and Empirical Perspectives*. Throughout, they managed to provide engaging insights into this exciting new field, drawing from their experience with ongoing research project *ReDICO: Research Digital Interculturality Co-operatively*, which is financed by the German Federal Ministry for Education and Research, CIGS being one of its international partners.

9 April 2022 saw the discussion of an exhibition inspired by influential German writer Erich Kästner's children's book *The 35th of May, or Conrad's Ride to the South Seas* in cooperation with the Centre for Irish-German Studies in Ennis, County Clare. In this

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project, Clare-based artists were inspired by Kästner's work to produce pieces of art then to be presented and discussed by the



Participants and contributors to the art project inspired by Erich Kästner's 'The 35th of May'.

participants themselves with Prof Gisela Holfter. An online reading group together with glór curator **Moran Been-noon** was also part of the event and worked as a meeting place to talk about ideas and things real and

fantastical, to get inspired and inspire others. The exhibition was curated by Moran Been-noon, with featured works by **Ana Colomer**, **Rachel Macmanus**, **Will O'Kane**, **Katya Polezhaeva** (see installation below), **Noreen Ramsay** and **Evelyn Sorohan**.



Jonas Hirschi (Diplomatic Documents of Switzerland) visited the Centre for Irish-German Studies on 3 October 2022 to present the goals and provisional results of his research on the diplomatic history shared by Ireland and Switzerland. Both nations, Hirschi argues, are insular – one geographically speaking, the other one politically – and have been marked by their agricultural heritage. Seeing this, however, there are quite as many things setting both countries and their historical engagement with other European nations apart. How these ever-changing circumstances and attitudes have manifested themselves in diplomatic documents is one of the key questions Hirschi is pursuing with research in the National Archives in Bern and Dublin. The lecture took place in a hybrid format. It was an excellent addition to previous research of the Centre of Irish-German Studies on diplomatic relations between Germany and Ireland (see *Irish-German Studies 13*, Trier: WVT 2020).



Jonas Hirschi

Exactly one week later, on 10 October 2022, the Centre for Irish-German Studies welcomed UL PhD student in history **Claire McCormick** for an enlightening lecture



Claire McCormick

on *The Irish Palatines: Eighteenth-Century Immigrants and Identity* that was both broad in scope and rich in historical detail: Settlers from the German Palatine region left their place of origin in pursuit of a better life abroad as part of an organised resettlement programme in the 18th century. In Ireland, they have left their traces particularly in County Limerick and various documents attest to their whereabouts. In her research, Claire McCormick is examining how their identities were both construed and

misconstrued as a minority group in and on their way to Ireland. The lecture took place in a hybrid format.

On Sunday, 27 November, Mylan Dungan's *History Show* on RTE Radio 1 started with an extensive interview on the work and life of Elizabeth Shaw, with CIGS members **Dr Sabine Egger** (MIC) and **Dr PD Fergal Lenehan** (University of Jena) as invited guests. Elizabeth Shaw was an Irish artist and illustrator with an extraordinary 20th century life story. Born in Belfast in 1920, Shaw spent most of her adult life living in communist East Berlin. She worked as a caricaturist for *Neues Deutschland*, the newspaper of the ruling Socialist Unity Party. She is best known, though, as an author of books for children. Generations of German children, also outside the GDR, have read the picture books she wrote and illustrated, which remain in print to this day. In Ireland, however, Elizabeth Shaw has remained largely unknown outside of academia.

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Both Dr Egger and Dr Lenehan have published research on Shaw in the Centre's Irish-German Studies series. The RTE interview arose from a publication by Dr Egger for [RTE Brainstorm](#) in 2021, followed by an interview with [BBC Northern Ireland](#) earlier this year. You can listen to the *History Show* on <https://www.rte.ie/radio/radio1/the-history-show/programmes/2022/1127/1338610-the-history-show-sunday-27-november-2022/>.

Finally, as one of the more light-hearted occasions for exchange during this year, we were happy to be involved in the festive celebration of *International Christmas in Limerick*. Hosted by the Hunt Museum and coordinated in cooperation with Limerick Arts Office, the event featured a full day of merrymaking in all the tongues, tastes and talents of Limerick's international communities – from Mexico to Algeria, from Bangladesh to Poland. CIGS members OeAD lecturer Alexandra Zach and DAAD teaching assistant Dominik Kohl were delighted to present various German and Austrian Christmas customs, accompanied by a short Christmas Quiz, in the distinguished setting of the Hunt Museum's Captain's Room as part of the event.



The Hunt is on: Dr Pippa Little (Limerick Arts Officer), Ywana Höffle, Dominik Kohl, Councillor Francis Foley (Mayor of Limerick) and Alexandra Zach.



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CURRENT & NEW PROJECTS

DAAD project: Exploring the past, enhancing the current position, and working towards 250 years of German Studies in Ireland, 2022-2024

The work on the DAAD project is in full swing and has already presented on progress so far in November 2022 at the annual conference of the GSAI. Prof Gisela Holfter (UL), Dr Joseph Twist (UCD), Dr Michaela Schrage-Früh (University of Galway) and Natascha Guggi (UL) gave an update on the three strands of the project (Strand 1 ‘Exploring and learning from the past’, Strand 2 ‘Enhancing German Studies in Ireland today’, Strand 3 ‘Working towards 250 years of German Studies in Ireland’).

Our book project entitled “Contributions to a History of German Studies in Ireland / Beiträge zur Geschichte der irischen Germanistik” (Strand 1) currently has twenty-eight contributors from sixteen institutions. As mentioned in our previous newsletter the book will contain both contributions written both in English (currently 65 percent) and in German (currently 35 percent). We still have space for more, so please contact Gisela if you want to contribute to this wonderful book.

Strand 2, which includes a needs analysis of German at third level institutions today, link up of online resources, feature seminars and workshops and the provision of more support for incoming colleagues and postgraduate students, is also making progress. We are happy to announce that we have secured a suitable domain and website hosting services for the next ten years called “Resources-for-German.com”. This will become accessible in the second half of 2023. The platform will provide annotated link lists to additional material as well as ‘ready-made’ material for German classes and useful links to other online resources. It is also planned

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to include reports from teaching innovations developed by colleagues. We will send out more information about the platform and how you can participate early in 2023. In addition, we are also working on a survey for the needs analysis of German at third level institutions, which will also be distributed early 2023. The final strand of the project will be a conference in UL in 2024.

Natascha Guggi

Unternehmen Deutsch 2022

The project “Unternehmen Deutsch” for Irish third-level institutions entered its second pilot-phase in September 2022. The Business German in Ireland Working Group (BuGI) have worked closely with the Goethe-Institute in Dublin (with some input from the Centre for Irish-German Studies) in revising and expanding the educational material created by the Goethe-Institute for second level, under the lead of Dr Michaela Schrage-Früh (University of Galway) and Prof Dr Gisela Holfter (UL). The project promotes cooperation between Irish universities and German businesses (currently Allianz, Bayer, Enercon, SAP and Siemens). It provides students with an opportunity of hands-on experience with foreign businesses and allows them to explore another language in a work environment as part of an innovative business-specific language course. At a recent presentation for DAAD *Lektors* and Teaching Assistants in the UK and Ireland by Dr Michaela Schrage-Früh there was considerable interest to develop this further and create a UK version. It is planned that the materials will be at least partially available on the website of the Goethe Institute and the Resources-for-German site. For more information, please contact michaela.schrage-frueh@universityofgalway.ie.

Michaela Schrage-Früh

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UPCOMING EVENTS

Guest Lecture *The Story Behind the UN Sustainable Development Goals* by David Donoghue, chaired by Prof. Shane Kilcommins, Provost and Deputy President, 7 February 2023, 6pm



David Donoghue

David Donoghue was the Permanent Representative of Ireland to the United Nations in New York 2013-17. At the request of the President of the General Assembly, he served as co-facilitator (with Kenya) for the UN negotiations which led to the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in 2015 and he has been actively involved with issues relating to the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals. The topic of the SDG is especially timely as there will be a major UN summit next September to review progress towards the SDGs. Previously David was Irish ambassador to Germany and many other countries. We are very proud to have him as a member of the Advisory Board of the Centre for Irish-German Studies since 2019 and delighted he will join us. The event will take place in blended format.

Guest Lecture *Sustainability Reporting at German Universities* by Philipp Nußbaum, chaired by Andrea Deverell (UL), 15 February 2023

Philipp Nußbaum is a research associate and project manager at „HIS-Institut für Hochschulentwicklung e.V.“ (engl.: Institute for Higher Education Development) in Hanover, Germany. The association operates a research-based



Philipp Nußbaum

independent competence centre for consulting on issues of higher education development and the organisation of research and teaching and provides services for the ministries of the German federal states, universities and non-university research and educational institutions. Philipp works on topics including sustainable development, climate protection, and energy efficiency. In this context, he has looked at the status of sustainability reporting at German universities with a particular focus on how sustainable development is currently measured. This will be an online event.

2022/23 German-Irish Video Competition for students on Irish-German relations – last week of February 2022

With the success of previous year's edition, the German-Irish Student Video Competition is currently passing through its second consecutive run. With numerous imaginative, funny and instructive videos produced in the past, we are very much looking forward to seeing this year's contributions for ourselves. The competition is open to all 3rd level institutions in Ireland and has seen submissions

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from cities and students throughout the whole country. Again, thanks to the generosity of the German-Irish Chamber of Commerce (special thanks are due to Ralf Lissek), generous prizes will be available and Derek Scally (*Irish Times*) has kindly committed to being MC again at the event in the end of February when the winning group videos will be chosen and announced by the German Ambassador in Dublin and the Irish Ambassador in Berlin.

Panel Discussion *Literary Discussions of the Environment, Climate Change and Sustainability* with Prof Joachim Fischer (CIGS, UL), Anne Nospickel (UL, DAAD) and Clarisa Novello (UL), March/April 2023 (date to be confirmed)

A panel discussion of UL-based CIGS members will focus on the literary and cultural dimensions of discussing the environment, climate change and sustainability and their portrayals.

Lecture and discussion with John Gormley (former Irish Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government and former Leader, Green Party) on his personal journey into environmental issues and specifically what role his time in Germany played and links between the German and the Irish Green parties and, **March / April 2023 (date to be confirmed)**

The ReDICO (Researching Digital Interculturality Co-operatively) project based at the universities of Jena, Mainz and Potsdam (and partnered by CIGS) will host its **second online conference from 26 June to 7 July 2023 on “Cosmopolitanism in a Postdigital, Postmigrant Europe, and Beyond”**. Keynote addresses from Prof Em. Gerard Delanty (University of Sussex), and Prof Naika Foroutan (DeZIM Berlin). For more information and registration please contact CIGS member Dr Fergal Lenehan fergal.lenehan@uni-jena.de.

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DAAD Postgraduate Summer School: “Germany in the World: Intersecting Inequalities in Challenging Times”, hosted by King’s College London, 17-21 July 2023. Co-organised by the Centre for British Studies at Humboldt-Universität Berlin and the Centre for Irish-German Studies at the University of Limerick. The interdisciplinary summer school is designed for PhD students and advanced MA students from across the Humanities and Social Sciences in the UK, Germany and Ireland, as well as from the DAAD-funded global network of Centres for German and European Studies. The summer school’s chosen focus on “Intersecting Inequalities” requires participants to consider the urgent implications of recent global challenges and social movements for reassessing the discipline of German Studies in a comparative contemporary perspective. Postgraduate students who want to apply for the summer school (accommodation, subsistence and travel can most likely be covered) are asked to submit an abstract (300-400 words) for a 15-minute presentation – including name and institution, a one-page CV including key research areas and academic interests, and a letter of motivation. The proposal should be submitted by your supervisor with a brief confirmation of their support to intersecting_inequalities@kcl.ac.uk by 24 January 2023.

3rd Limerick-Ulster Conference, November 2023, University of Limerick. Plans are underway for the continuation of our successful international conference format, jointly organised by the Centre for Irish German Studies at UL, the Faculty of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences at Ulster University, Belfast and in cooperation with the Konrad Adenauer Foundation Dublin/London, building on the success of the two previous conferences in November 2021 (Limerick) and November 2022 (Belfast).

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