

Centre *news*

No. 15 May 2013

New Adjunct Professor of the Centre for Irish-German Studies – Professor Emeritus Eoin Bourke



Photo: Amadeus Markowski

Prof Eoin Bourke, Emeritus Professor of German at NUI Galway, is one of the foremost researchers in Irish-German Studies in Ireland. His numerous publications in the area span dozens of articles and several books over more than three decades. He has shown great leadership in developing the theme in NUI Galway. His latest work *Poor Green Erin*

received not only critical acclaim but also captured the interest of the Irish public and media, an amazing achievement for a nearly 800 page book of 19th century German travel accounts of Ireland. It serves as testament to his sensitive translations and his writing skills and careful contextualization. He is highly esteemed by colleagues in Ireland, Great Britain and on the continent.

New external member

Dr Angela Vaupel is senior lecturer in European Studies at St Mary's University College, a college of Queen's University Belfast. Within the Liberal Arts degree, she is mainly teaching on aspects of European culture and area studies such as the history of the idea of Europe and representations of (minority) identities and otherness in European film and literature. She is the author of two books (on the representation of women in Nazi Film, 2005, and on the reception of exile literature and Lion Feuchtwanger's work in Germany, 2007) and has published peer-reviewed studies on identity representations as well as on the development of intercultural competence. She is a member of the International Feuchtwanger Society, the European Federation of Centres and Associations of Irish Studies and a fellow of the Higher Education Academy in the UK. Her research interests include Cultural Studies,

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Exile and Memory Studies, Intercultural Education, European Film, German-Irish cultural relations.

German National Day of Unity, Reception of the German Embassy at UL, 5 October 2012

The jointly organised of the German Embassy and the Centre for Irish-German Studies event brought together almost a hundred guests from politics (among them Minister of Finance Michael Noonan, T.D.), academia and business. In his speech, German Ambassador to Ireland, Dr Eckhard Lübke meier explained that “Limerick was a natural choice for several reasons. In my 15 months in Ireland, I have been to Limerick more often than to any other city.” He congratulated the University on its 40th anniversary and continued: “There is another reason why it is appropriate to celebrate German unity at the University of Limerick. UL has a Centre for Irish-German Studies that is the only one of its kind in Ireland. It was founded 15 years ago and it has matured into a renowned academic institution. But the Centre is more than a place of academic learning, teaching and research. The Centre has been a meeting place bringing together people from diverse national and social backgrounds as well as a market place for the exchange of knowledge and ideas. In this way, the Centre has become a bridge between Ireland and Germany.” He expressly thanked the directors and all staff and students “for their enthusiasm and their excellent work”.



Patrick O'Donovan T.D.; Pat Breen, Chairman Dail Committee on Foreign Affairs; Prof Paul McCutcheon, Vice-President and Registrar, H.E. Dr Eckhard Lübke meier, German Ambassador to Ireland; Michael Noonan, TD, Minister of Finance and Dr Gisela Holfter, Joint Director, Centre for Irish-German Studies.

If you want to prevent Alzheimers, keep surfing or become a Buddhist monk! Centre for Irish-German Studies Colloquium on Ageing in German and Irish Culture and Society

By Elizabeth Anderson

For anyone who attended the recent colloquium on ‘Ageing in Germany and Ireland’ at UL’s Centre for Irish-German Studies on 7 November 2012, chances are they will consider converting to Buddhism, or at the very least they will surf the web but with a specific goal in mind. Professor Billy O’Connor (Foundation Professor and Head of Teaching and Research in Physiology at the University of Limerick Graduate Entry Medical School) explained how focused internet surfing helps to engage the brain’s neural networks, thereby helping to prevent Alzheimer’s Disease. Meditation, i.e. “paying attention on purpose without judgment,” also keeps the brain active while helping to reduce stress. Professor Desmond O’Neill (Senior Academic in Medical Gerontology at the TCD campus at Tallaght Hospital) addressed the issue of ageing through art and music, focussing specifically on the German-speaking context.



Patricia Conboy of Older and Bolder, which campaigns on behalf of older people, provided facts on ageing in Irish society, comparing them with data from Germany. Centre member and DAAD Lektor Dr Michaela Schrage-Früh spoke about the treatment of ageing women in Irish poetry. The colloquium finished with a paper by organiser Dr Sinead Crowe on the treatment of ageing in contemporary German theatre and the dissociation between the ageing body and the ageless self that does not recognise its reflection in the mirror. A major theme of the colloquium was emphasising the positive aspects of ageing – what Professor O’Neill calls the “longevity dividend” – without denying the challenges we face as we get older.



Dr Gisela Holfter (Joint Director, CIGS); Prof Desmond O'Neill (Tallaght Hospital, Consultant Physician in Geriatric and Stroke Medicine); Patricia Conboy (Dublin, Director of Older and Bolder); Dr Michaela Schrage-Früh (DAAD Lektor & CIGS, UL); Dr Sinead Crowe (CIGS, UL); and Prof Billy O'Connor (Medical School, UL). Photo: Eoin Stephenson

'An Duais 2012' for new MA in Irish-German Studies

On 2 November 2012 Dr Gisela Holfter received An Duais 2012 for the newly established MA in Irish-German Studies. The German Ireland Fund's Academic Award was established "as an annual award for outstanding academic achievements in the field of Irish Studies (including Anglo-Irish Studies) and especially Irish-German Studies". The prize was presented by Dr Ursula Hassel, board member of Ireland German Fund during a festive charity dinner at the residency of the German Ambassador to Ireland.

The prize will go towards fee waivers for students of the MA in Irish-German Studies. We are delighted that also the **Swiss Embassy** committed to give a fee waiver for a Swiss student and **Dr Beate Schuler** very generously will again support the programme with a fee waiver in 2013/2014. Many thanks to them and any other supporters and new friends of the Centre!

Mulled Wine Reception with Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, Jimmy Deenihan, T.D. on 29. November 2012

This year the Mulled Wine Reception of the Centre contained also the Limerick launch of five recent books in Irish-German Studies, edited or written by members or friends of the Centre. Following some very complimentary words by Minister Jimmy Deenihan on the work of the Centre, the five books were briefly described to the large audience. Christiane Schönfeld, Senior Lecturer and Head of German, Mary Immaculate College, Limerick introduced *Polish-Irish Encounters in the Old and New Europe*, edited by Centre member Sabine Egger and John McDonagh of MIC (Reimagining Ireland, Peter Lang, 2011). Gisela Holfter introduced Eoin Bourke's *Poor Green Erin* (Peter Lang, 2011, new edition 2012). Eoin Bourke then repaid the compliments with his presentation of the *Marx-Engels Jahrbuch 2011* (Berlin Akademie Verlag 2012, guest editors Gisela Holfter and Jürgen Herres) to which he himself had contributed. Joachim Fischer introduced Gisela Holfter's *Heinrich Böll and Ireland* (Cambridge Scholars Publishing 2011, paperback 2012). Final speaker Manfred Schewe, Head of German at UCC, combined presenting Joachim Fischer, Rolf Stehle's (eds) *Contemporary German-Irish Cultural Relations in a European Perspective* (Trier: WVT 2012, volume 6 of *Irish-German Studies* series) with a look back at shared memories some twenty-five years of German teaching in Ireland.



From top left:
 Professor Emeritus Eoin Bourke, Dr Sabine Egger, Dr Joachim Fischer;
 seated: Dr Gisela Holfter, Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht Jimmy Deenihan, T.D., Professor Tom Lodge, Dean AHSS

Limericker Literaturgespräche German-speaking writers in Limerick



Annette Pehnt's reading great success

By Ann Hayes

March 1st, 2013 saw Annette Pehnt, one of Germany's leading literary ladies, visit the University of Limerick as part of a series of talks by authors organised by the Centre for Irish-German Studies in cooperation with NUI Galway and the DAAD writer-in-residence scheme. Pehnt, who spent part of her studies in Galway and did a PhD on Irish literature, gave a reading from her latest work *Hier kommt Michelle*, a satirical look at the implications of the Bologna Process on the German university system.

Pehnt engaged in a fascinating discussion with her audience, centering on her role in contemporary literature and her approach to writing as a craft. She also outlined some of the problems with the Bologna process as she sees them, arguing that students in Germany are increasingly required to carry out rote learning rather than engage in academic debate, as the standardisation and sweeping reforms introduce highly-structured, market-oriented courses.



Irish resident and Zurich-born author Hansjörg Schertenleib visits Centre

By Mary McDermot

Organised in cooperation and with the support of the Swiss Embassy Dublin and Pro Helvetia, the Centre for Irish-German Studies welcomed Swiss author, journalist and translator Hansjörg Schertenleib for an afternoon gathering in Plassey House on the 20th of March, 2013. Having emigrated to Donegal in 1996, he now has Irish citizenship and an Irish accent. His works largely explore themes of emigration as well

as Swiss and Irish contemporary issues. He writes radio plays, drama, poetry, short stories, and novels, many of which have been translated from German into English, French, Dutch and Bulgarian. After a reading from his 2008 novel *Das Regenorchester*, he engaged in a lively discussion about his work and perspective, and gave a very interesting account of life as a Swiss-Irish writer living on the Celtic Fringe.



The final reading of the 'Limericker Literaturgespräche' for this academic year was by **Judith Hermann**. It was organised in cooperation with the Goethe Institut Dublin and took place on 22 April 2013. Judith Hermann's first book, *Sommerhaus, später* (1998, transl. *Summerhouse, Later*) created a huge stir and was very favourably

received by the critics. It has sold over 250,000 copies, has been translated into 17 languages and has made her one of the best known young writers of Germany. In 2003 *Nichts als Gespenster* (*Nothing But Ghosts*) followed and in 2009 *Alice*. Judith Hermann read 'Diesseits der Oder' and enjoyed her first time in Dublin and Limerick so much that she hopes to return in the autumn. We hope so, too! It was a great pleasure not only to welcome Judith Hermann but also **Mechtild Manus**, the new director of the Goethe-Institut to UL.

All readings were recorded on video and should be available on the Centre for Irish-German Studies website in the not too distant future.

Supporting Charity Partnership Cycle4sickchildren & TC Rodde Igels

On Friday 22 March 2013 the Centre hosted representatives of a budding Irish-German project of a special kind – a charity cycling club based in Limerick called "Cycle 4 Sick Children"(for more info see <http://www.cycle4sickchildren.com/>) that got together with a German charity with similar objectives and goals called TC Rodde Igels (<http://tc-rodde-igels.de/cms/>) who have to date raised some 340,000 euro for children with cancer.



The two groups hope to develop a long term relationship that will benefit both clubs. Following the official signing of a partnership agreement at Limerick City Hall they came out to the University of Limerick for some tea and coffee, a quick tour of facilities and some input on the work of the Centre. Following a most enjoying weekend with the German visitors the Irish side have started to put some plans together for a return trip to Munster in Germany at the end of the summer. Furthermore, wider ranging ideas such as creating a Pan European Forum specifically for charities are currently discussed. For anyone who would like to get involved with the Irish side please contact Liam Mulcahy at info@cycle4sickchildren.com.

Other News

Michael Genster, CEO of Kostal Ireland, gave a fascinating lecture to the Business German Students on 14 March 2013 and invited the MA students for a visit in the autumn – thank you!

HE Thomas Nader, the new Austrian Ambassador to Ireland, and **Wilhelm Nest**, Commercial Counsellor visited UL on 24 April. The Ambassador kindly agreed to continue the patronage of the Centre with his German and Swiss colleagues and to give a lecture in the autumn.

Sabine Egger has been awarded a DAAD Research Grant for her project “Moving East/West: Transit Spaces in German Poetry and Short Prose”.

Joachim Fischer and **Gisela Holfter** will represent the Centre for Irish-German Studies at the upcoming *Irlandtage 2013* at the Universität Saarbrücken, 21-23 June 2013, for more information see: <http://www.uni-saarland.de/fak4/Irlandtage/>.

Lectures and Seminars

M. Albrecht, “German Multiculturalism and Postcolonialism in Comparative Perspective”, International Conference “(Post-) Colonialism Across Europe”, University of Bremen, 13-16 September 2012.

M. Albrecht, “Parameter der Veränderung” & G. Holfter, “Ist Reiseliteratur auch Interkulturelle Literatur? Ein Versuch der Einordnung, Workshop “Fragen der oder an die interkulturelle Literatur”, Centre for Transnational Studies, Mary Immaculate College, 12-13 April 2013.

S. Egger, “Der Osten als Nicht-Ort im neuen Europa?” International Conference “Shifting German Landscapes. Cultural Hybridity and Place”, University of Bath, 14 December 2012.

G. Holfter, “Aspects of Business German in Ireland”, Annual Colloquium Business German in Ireland Working Group “Business German in Ireland 2013 – Chances and Challenges”, Goethe Institut, 10 May 2013.

G. Holfter, “Friedrich Engels‘ Geschichte Irlands”, Wesley House, Leeson Street, Dublin, Lecture series of the Lutheran Church, 20 May 2013.

G. Holfter, “Reisende Europäer vor dem Ersten Weltkrieg”, Movens conference “Der reisende Europäer”, Göteborg, Sweden 3-6 June 2013.

F. Lenehan, “Irish-themed Musicals and ...nur der Wind/Only the Wind (W.G., 1961)”, Paper given at: “Ireland and Cinema: Culture and Contexts”, UCC, 18-20 April 2013.

Recent Publications

M. Albrecht, Comparative Literature and Postcolonial Studies Revisited: Reflections in Light of Recent Transitions in the Fields of Postcolonial Studies. In: *Comparative Critical Studies* 10:1 (February 2013), pp. 47-65

S. Crowe, *Religion in Contemporary German Drama*, Rochester, NY: Camden House 2013.

S. Egger, Ost(mittel)europa in der neueren deutschen Lyrik, in: F. Gruczu et al (eds), *Akten des XII Internationalen Germanistenkongresses Warschau*. Vol 5.2. Frankfurt et al: Oxford: Peter Lang 2012

G. Holfter, Nationale Erinnerungskulturen im Vergleich, in: F. Gruczu et al (eds), *Akten des XII Internationalen Germanistenkongresses Warschau*, vol 9 , Frankfurt et al: Peter Lang 2012, pp. 235-240.

F. Lenehan, Imagining and Re-imagining Transcultural Spaces - The 'Mitteleuropa' Discourse and Deconstructing the 'British Isles', in: Angela Pilch Ortega and Barbara Schröttner (eds): *Transnational Spaces and Regional Localization*, Münster: Waxmann, 2012, pp. 117-126.

F. Lenehan, A Land and a People of Extremes - Ireland and the Irish in German Cinema, *Irish Studies Review*, 2012, 20:1, pp. 25-45.

M. Schrage-Früh "Aren't We Citizens of the World?": Irish Diaspora and Its Discontents; AND A. Vaupel, Exile, Migration and 'the Other' in: Contemporary Irish Writing, in W. Huber et al (eds) *Ireland in/and Europe: Cross Currents and Exchanges*. WVT: Trier 2012.

A. Vaupel, Imaginary Reality: Ireland and the Irish in German Nazi Film, in: F. Ghazoul (ed.): The Imaginary and the Documentary. Cultural Studies in Literature, History, and the Arts. *Alif. Journal of Comparative Poetics*, 32/2012, pp. 167-86.

A. Vaupel (co-authored with Tracey McKay), The Place of the European Dimension in Post-Primary Curricula of Northern Ireland, in: S. Philippou (ed.) *Europe turned local – the local turned European? Constructions of "Europe" in Social Studies Curricula across Europe*. Münster: LIT Verlag 2012, pp. 92-119.

A. Vaupel, "There is no "normal" way of doing things': Interculturality and the Development of Intercultural Competence, in: C. Hogan, N. Rentel, S. Schwerter (eds.) *Bridging Cultures: Intercultural Mediation in Literature, Linguistics and the Arts*, Stuttgart: Ibidem 2012, pp. 21-37.

Books due to be published in 2013

Fergal Lenehan, *Europe and Intellectuals - Imagining a Europe of Regions in 20th Century Germany, Britain and Ireland* (Irish-German Studies 7).

Sabine Egger (ed.), *Irish-German Biographies II – Translating Cultures* (Irish-German Studies 8).

Coming up – dates for your calendar

Autumn semester lecture series of the Centre for Irish-German Studies Speakers include **H.E. Thomas Nader**, Austrian Ambassador to Ireland

(date to be confirmed) and **Prof Emer O'Sullivan** (Leuphana Universität, Lüneburg) 25-27 September 2013.

Event on Irish-German music links in collaboration with **Dr Gareth Cox**, Head of Music Dept of MIC in October 2013.

14th Limerick Conference in Irish-German Studies: Ireland and German-speaking refugees 1933-45: A colloquium on German-speaking exiles and the national and international context 75 years ago - 7/8 November 2013.

See also <http://www.ul.ie/~lcs/Irish-German/>.

Ongoing PhD research projects

Antoinette McNamara, Nazi-Children as Victims? Developments in the Representation of the Past in Recent German-speaking Literature (M. Krajenbrink).

Claudia Reese, Multicultural Identity in Contemporary Irish Writing (G. Holfter and T. O'Toole, English section, LLCC).

Birte Schulz, Questions of Identity – German-speaking exiles in Ireland 1933-1945' (G. Holfter).

Martti Steinke (IRCHSS postgraduate scholar), German-speaking refugees in Northern Ireland 1933 to 1945 (G. Holfter).

Sara Eriksson, Tagebücher im Internetzeitalter – Medientheorie und autobiographisches Schreiben (Universitet Stockholm, joint external supervisor G. Holfter).

Selection of ongoing research projects

S. Egger, Moving East/West: Transit Spaces in German Literature.

J. Fischer, Germany as a Factor in Irish Modernisation Debates, 1916–today: Closer to Boston than Berlin? (Manchester Univ. Press).

G Holfter / H. Dickel (Wiesbaden), German-speaking Refugees in Ireland 1933-45.

G. Holfter / J. Herres (BBAW, Berlin), Friedrich Engels and Ireland.

F. Lenehan, German Narratives of Ireland 1945-2010.

J. aan de Wiel, Ireland, East Germany and the Cold War, 1945-1990 (Manchester Univ. Press).

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