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Centre for
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Zentrum für
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Centre news

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WELCOME TO THE DECEMBER 2024 EDITION OF THE CENTRE FOR IRISH-GERMAN STUDIES NEWSLETTER

As the year draws to a close, it's the perfect time to look back and reflect on all we have accomplished. As you will see, we have been highly active: organising lectures and readings, producing publications, creating new material resources, hosting groups, welcoming new PhD students, and celebrating several successful funding initiatives. Highlights include continuing the *Limericker Literaturgespräche* series with German authors, hosting speakers from German-Irish businesses and holding our 21th international conference at UL – the culmination of the 2022-2024 DAAD project *Promoting German Studies in Ireland*, in collaboration with the GSAI. Additionally, we continued our excellent partnership with the University of Ulster, the KAS & the Martens Centre for our 4th joint conference, which returned to Belfast.

Our book collection continues to expand, highlighted by the recent launch of the Gottschalk Collection, which has become the heart of our Irish-German collection. This remarkable donation, made five years ago by the late Jürgen Gottschalk, includes several thousand works, among them rare and unique texts, such as a 16th-century book that is the only copy in Ireland. We were honoured to welcome Jürgen's wife, Traute, and their sons, Christof and Martin, for this special occasion, alongside other distinguished guests. Finally, we are thrilled to welcome several new members to the Centre and we are looking forward to the activities planned for 2025, as outlined in this newsletter. Thanks so much for all your support (a special shout-out to Dr Beate Schuler)! Wishing you all a very happy Christmas and the very best for 2025: *Frohe Weihnachten und einen guten Rutsch!* Nollaig Shona agus Athbhliain faoi mhaise daoibh!



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PEOPLE AND PROJECTS



We were deeply saddened to learn of the passing of the renowned Irish-German artist **Imogen Stuart** (1927–2024). Imogen leaves behind a remarkable legacy, with her art gracing numerous locations across Ireland. Her life and work beautifully embodied a unique synthesis of Irish and German influences. Arriving in Ireland in the late 1940s, she dedicated seven decades to her craft, producing an extensive and enduring body of work.

A master of sculptural art, Imogen was recognized with numerous accolades, including her election to Aosdána and the distinguished honor of being named a Saoi. She was a valued friend of the Centre for Irish-German Studies, enriching our community by attending two conferences in Limerick, in 2007 and 2017. We are profoundly grateful for all she contributed—her boundless enthusiasm, deep interest, and her unparalleled ability to create beauty that continues to inspire. Her legacy is an enduring example of creativity and cultural connection. *Ar dheis Dé go raibh a hanam.*

New Members

We are delighted to welcome several new members to the Centre: **Dr Immanuel Darkwa** is an Assistant Professor with the School of History and Geography. He is a trained interdisciplinary academic with backgrounds in Geography (PhD), Architectural Engineering and Sustainability (MSc) and Architecture & Urban



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Planning (BSc). With a keen interest in Climate Change and related fields, his research and teaching focus is at the intersection of Physical and Human Geography. Hailing from Dortmund in Germany's NRW region, Immanuel is a cultural navigator who lives and works in Ireland, Germany, Tanzania and Ethiopia and Canada, where he either has family or research relationships investigating innovative Energy Transitions, and advocating for and supporting the development of improved Food Systems that tackle Post Harvest Loss, Malnutrition and help achieve SDG 2-Zero Hunger through Climate Action (SDG 13), within developing country contexts. Occasionally, Immanuel goes back to the drawing table and practices a bit of Architecture, designing and developing bespoke home extension modular units, post-disaster transitional shelters or infrastructure that help address the heat island effect and pollution.



Paula Riese joined the University of Limerick in September 2024. She is the DAAD (German Academic Exchange Service) Teaching Assistant and in this capacity teaches German and supports the Centre for Irish-German Studies. Paula is also a PhD candidate in the German Section at the University of Limerick under supervision of Prof. Michaela Schrage-Früh. She



studied in Germany and Canada for her Joint-degree Master in “Intercultural German Studies”. In her research, she works on trauma, motherhood, and Irish-German connections. She is looking forward to being a member of the Centre, where she would like to focus on German-Irish relations in literature.

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Sigrid Rieuwerts is Professor (Privatdozentin) for English Literature and Culture at the Johannes Gutenberg-Universität Mainz and teaches courses on Scottish and Irish history, literature and culture. She is also the commissioner for Scotland for the Ministry of Science and Health in



Rheinland-Pfalz and the head of the JGU Scotland HUB. In this capacity she and her team run Global Outreach – Global Citizen projects not only for students from Scotland, but also from Ireland. For her work on “European Engagement and Dialogue” she received the prestigious Council of Constance Award in 2022. By becoming a member of the Centre, she hopes to create more opportunities for Irish-German engagements and dialogue, especially in the Rhineland-Palatine area, building further on activities with the Irish Consulate in Frankfurt.

Julia Weiß has been working at the University of Limerick since



September 2024. She is the DAAD-(German Academic Exchange Service) Lektorin and is teaching German language, literature and culture as well as Business German. Before she came to UL, she was the DAAD teaching assistant at the University of Galway in 2023/24. Julia graduated from the University of Würzburg with a state-examination degree in

English and History for secondary school teaching as well as with a Bachelor’s degree in History and Latin Philology. She is excited about being a member of the Centre not least because her well-loved Würzburg is THE Irish city on the continent.

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Visitors to the Centre for Irish-German Studies

On 8 May, we were delighted to welcome **Joe Walsh** and the Executive Team from **Siemens Ireland**: Keith Bolton, David Gibson, Aiden Cawley, Mary Miller, Audrey Anderson and Isha Christley to the University of Limerick. Our discussions focused on the upcoming centenary of the Shannon Scheme, a landmark moment in Irish history. The group also had the opportunity to explore parts of our vibrant university, including the impressive Glucksman Library. We appreciate their visit and eagerly anticipate collaborating on our joint event in July 2025!



On 28 May, we had the pleasure of hosting a group from the **Heinrich Böll Stiftung Berlin**, Germany. It was particularly special to welcome Heinrich Böll's son, René, back to the University of Limerick. The group enjoyed a tour of the beautiful university campus as well as a comprehensive update on the latest developments in Irish-German studies, presented in a hybrid format with Emeritus Prof. Joachim Fischer joining from Limerick and Prof. Gisela Holfter contributing from Göteborg University where she attended a conference.

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Four weeks later, on 26 June, we had the pleasure of welcoming an energetic group from **further education institutions in NRW**, VHS Hagen, Arbeit & Leben Bergisches Land, and the Europäisches Bildungs- und Begegnungszentrum Irland/ Gaeltacht Reisen. Eager to deepen their understanding of Irish-German relations, the group visited us after stops at the Irish Parliament and the German Embassy.



On 20 September, **H.E. Mag. Melitta Schubert**, the newly appointed Austrian Ambassador, paid a visit to the University of Limerick. During a guided tour of the campus, she engaged in insightful discussions on Irish-Austrian relations and explored opportunities for fostering deeper cultural and academic ties. The visit also included lunch with Dr **Sandra Joyce**, Dean of the Faculty for Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences, and a stop at the Glucksman Library, where the ambassador viewed the Irish-German book collection, showcasing the university's commitment to promoting intercultural exchange and facilitating excellent research facilities. We extend our heartfelt thanks to Ambassador Schubert for her visit and greatly look forward to continued collaboration.



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Johannes Vith, H.E. Melitta Schubert, Associate Prof. Marieke Krajenbrink and Julia Weiss

Additionally, we would like to express our sincere gratitude to her predecessor, former Ambassador Dr Thomas Nader for his invaluable support during his time in Ireland, particularly in strengthening Austrian-Irish connections. We wish him a fulfilling and well-deserved retirement!

On 10 October, we were delighted to welcome the German Ambassador, **H.E. David Gill**, to the University of Limerick. Ambassador Gill met UL Acting President Prof. **Shane Kilcommins** and shared insights into his professional journey, discussed his vision and priorities for the years ahead, and engaged with students and staff from our German Section on a range of German-Irish topics. His thoughtful answers to questions highlighted his commitment to fostering strong ties between the two countries. The visit concluded with a walk across the scenic Living Bridge, offering an opportunity for more informal discussions with students and staff. We were delighted that Limerick was the first destination outside Dublin for Ambassador Gill and we hope to welcome him again in the near future.



Prof. Shane Kilcommins and H.E. David Gill



And, as with his Austrian colleague, we wish to express our deepest thanks to former Ambassador Mr Cord Meier-Klodt for his unwavering support of the Centre during his tenure. We wish him all the best for a happy and fulfilling retirement!

The German Traces in Ireland Project

A particularly exciting development this year was the further expansion of the Goethe-Institut Dublin's innovative project, *Deutsche Spuren in Irland* (German Traces in Ireland). Originally launched in 2012/13 as part of an international initiative with counterparts in Brazil, Copenhagen, New York, and Russia, the project continues to highlight the historical and cultural connections between Germany and Ireland.

Renowned journalists **Ralf Sotscheck** and **Fintan O'Toole** contributed compelling texts to the project, while CIGS undertook thorough background research. This initiative remains the Goethe-Institut Dublin's most popular website, and we are thrilled to have enriched it with additional materials and bibliographical references. These enhancements aim to support project work for German learners at both secondary and tertiary levels and provide valuable insights to the wider public.

For more information see [Deutsche Spuren in Irland - Goethe-Institut Irland](#). Special thanks to Dr **Chloe Fagan** from the Goethe Institut Dublin who was a wonderful support throughout.



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Congratulations: Appointments and Funding Successes in Irish-German Studies

Congratulations to CIGS member Associate Professor **Christiane Schönfeld**, Head of German in MIC, on her election to the Royal Irish Academy in 2024, a wonderful achievement! She is also part of a successful DAAD application by the German Studies Screen Network's steering committee (with Dr Dora Osborne, Dr Paul Flaig/St. Andrews; Molly Harrabin/Warwick). This will fund a series of professional and outreach activities in Scotland, England and Ireland, 2025-2027 (see below under upcoming events).

Congratulations to Dr **Sabine Egger**, Prof. **Fergal Lenehan**, and Dr **Áine McGillicuddy** on securing full project funding (€33,164) from the DAAD for their initiative, *Elizabeth Shaw's Irish Berlin: Promoting German Language and Culture among Adults and Children* (2025-2026; PIs Dr Sabine Egger, MIC, and Prof. Fergal Lenehan, University of Jena; with Dr Aine McGillicuddy, DCU). The project highlights the life and work of Belfast-born writer and illustrator Elizabeth Shaw (1920–1992). Shaw became one of East Germany's most celebrated authors and illustrators of children's literature. Key components of the project include the publication of an illustrated edition of Shaw's memoir, *Irish Berlin: How I Came to Berlin* (1990), in English with Lilliput Press. It will also feature cultural events in Berlin and Dublin, the development of primary school resources based on Shaw's work and other picture books, training sessions for primary school teachers and B.Ed. students, and an online academic conference culminating in a publication.

Another significant success for the Centre for Irish-German Studies (CIGS) is the funding of the project *Promoting German Studies in Ireland – Irish-German Studies and its many facets: research,*

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dialogue, and promotion to enhance German Studies in Ireland in a European context. Led by Prof. **Gisela Holfter**, the project (encompassing four key strands) has been awarded €114,996.74 by the DAAD for three years (2025–2027). The project will be carried out in collaboration with a stellar team, including current and former GSAI chairs: Dr **Joseph Twist** (UCD), Associate Professor **Marieke Krajenbrink** (UL), Dr **Linda Shortt** (MU), and Associate Professor **Michaela Schrage-Früh** (UL, Strand 2). Additional contributors include Associate Professor **Sabine Egger** (MIC, Strand 3), Prof. **Paul Carmichael** (Ulster University, Strand 4), and other CIGS members such as **Orla Prendergast**, Dr **Anita Barmettler**, and Associate Professor **Veronica O'Regan**, who will focus on Strand 2. The project will investigate a range of areas, including the history of German Studies through an international comparative lens, the impact and necessity of Modern Languages in Ireland, the development of specialized learning materials, and strategies to strengthen dialogue between Ireland (North and South), the UK, and Germany. Outcomes are expected to include conferences, two edited volumes, and the creation of innovative digital learning tools.

Additionally, CIGS secured €29,818 through UL's inaugural competitive internal funding for Research Centres (2025–2027). This funding will provide one day per week of administrative support, greatly enhancing the Centre's capacity to advance its initiatives, a truly exciting development for the future of CIGS.

We also look forward to working closely together with UL's Centre for European Studies, led by CIGS member Associate Prof. **Michaela Schrage-Früh**, who also obtained €78,430 funding from the DAAD for an exciting project on "European Societal Challenges

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in German Culture: Exploring Ageing and Climate Change in Tandem” (with Co-Investigator Dr **Tina-Karen Pusse**, Galway).

PAST EVENTS 2024

Guest Lecture *Postkolonialismus in der Kritik* by **Monica Albrecht**



Our first guest lecture of 2024 was delivered by Prof. **Monika Albrecht** (apl. Prof.) on February 8. Her engaging talk, titled “*Postkolonialismus in der Kritik*” (Postcolonialism under Criticism), drew a diverse and enthusiastic audience, both in-person and online. Prof. Albrecht, a distinguished scholar in Cultural Studies and Sociology at the University of Vechta, Germany, has an impressive academic background, having previously held positions in the UK, Ireland, and the USA. In addition to her lecture, Prof. Albrecht generously offered one-to-one masterclasses for PhD students from UL, Mary Immaculate College, and UCD. These sessions were particularly beneficial for postgraduate students, providing them with valuable insights and guidance as part of the DAAD project *Promoting German in Ireland* (2022–2024).

Irish-German Business Lecture Series – Spring 2024

Guest Lecture by **Simon Dauber, Allianz & AHK Irland**

On 27 February we had the pleasure to welcome **Simon Dauber** for our first business lecture of the year, chaired by Orla Prendergast (CIGS, UL). Simon is the Chief Operating Officer of Allianz Global Life, a cross-border life insurance company based in Dublin with

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branches in several other countries, he also became the president of the German-Irish Chamber of Industry and Commerce (AHK Ireland) in 2023. He said that Germany is Ireland's largest European and second largest global export destination and therefore trade with Germany makes a significant contribution to Ireland's economy. Simon gave a detailed overview of the current standing of Irish-German business relationships and his own thoughts of how these might develop in the future. Once again there was a great turnout for this lecture with many joining not only in person but also online. Afterwards, Simon contributed to our "Why learn German" video project – thanks so much!



Guest Lecture by Liam Ryan, SAP

On Friday 22 March, we had the second instalment of this year's Irish-German business lecture series. **Liam Ryan**, Managing Director of SAP Ireland, came to speak about 'Irish-German business connections – the example of SAP', chaired by Professor Deirdre O'Loughlin (UL). Liam gave a detailed account of his beginnings working for Siemens in Germany, his own journey of learning German up to his position now, where he has overseen the growth of SAP's operations in Ireland totalling 2,300 Employees in 55 Lines-of-Business in Dublin and



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Galway. Liam also contributed to our “Why learn German” video project – again, thanks a million!

Limericker Literaturgespräche

Reading of *Boxhagener Platz* and *Öl und Bienen* by Torsten Schulz

As part of our *Limericker Literaturgespräche* series, supported by the DAAD, we were thrilled to welcome back Torsten Schulz on 21 March. Schulz, a celebrated author, director, and professor of drama studies at Filmuniversität Babelsberg, began the event with a reading from his acclaimed novel *Boxhagener Platz*. Set in East Berlin during communist times, the novel has enjoyed significant success and was adapted into both a film—featured at the Berlinale—and a radio play, which received multiple awards. Schulz also shared a passage from his latest novel, *Öl und Bienen* (2022), offering further insights into his evolving literary voice. He enriched the reading with personal anecdotes about his creative process, which captivated the audience and engaged in a lively discussion with students.



Reading of *Was unvergessen bleibt* (2023) by Reinhard Kuhnert

Reinhard Kuhnert, born in Berlin in 1945, is a multifaceted German artist – director, actor, writer, playwright, songwriter, and voice actor whose career spans several decades. From 1994 to 2007, Kuhnert split his time between Germany and Ireland, a connection reflected in his work. Kuhnert joined us on 8 April for a reading from

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his latest publication, *Was unvergessen bleibt* (2023), which is partially set in Ireland. The event was organised by CIGS member Dr Anita Barmettler, and was made possible through the excellent collaboration with colleagues at Mary Immaculate College (MIC). Our sincere thanks go to all who contributed to this memorable event.



CIGS members Associate Professor Marieke Krajenbrink, OeAD Lecturer Johannes Vith and Dr Anita Barmettler with Reinhard Kuhnert (third from the left)

Reading of *Malé* (2020) by Roman Ehrlich



Roman Ehrlich

For the third and final reading of German authors the Centre for Irish-German Studies had the pleasure of welcoming German author **Roman Ehrlich** (Berlin) on 16 and 17 April as part of the *Limericker Literaturgespräche*. The readings from his novel *Malé* (longlisted for the German Buchpreis 2020) were a great success and attracted not only many students and colleagues in UL but also online guests, hailing from Malta, Germany, the UK and Ireland. His excellent reading and the fascinating theme of *Malé* led to a lively discussion and he was persuaded to give us some hints about his new book which sounds most promising.

CIGS Irish-German Video Competition

On 21 May, the Goethe-Institut in Dublin hosted an exciting event: the first hybrid **Centre for Irish-German Studies Video Competition** for final-year German students. This lively competition featured creative and insightful videos judged by a distinguished panel of experts, including Irish Ambassador to Germany H.E. Dr **Nicholas O'Brien**, German



Alexandra Voss and the winning team: Lauren Hayes, Lucy O'Byrne & Ciara-Mae Somers

Ambassador to Ireland H.E. **Cord Meier-Klodt**, Goethe-Institut Director **Ulrike Gasser**, Interim CEO of the German-Irish Chamber of Industry and Commerce **Alexandra Voss**, and *Irish Times* Berlin correspondent **Derek Scally**.

The winning group Lauren Hayes, Lucy O'Byrne, and Ciara-Mae Somers captured first place with their video *Eine neue Heimat für die Iren in Deutschland: Berlin*. Inspired by their Erasmus experiences in Germany, the video showcased their creativity and depth of knowledge. Second place was secured by another University of Limerick team (Julie Cizek, Francis Donnelly, and Amy O'Leary), while the third prize went to a University of Galway group (Valerie Hayes, Lauren Mohan, and Niamh McManus).

A heartfelt thank-you goes to the German-Irish Chamber of Industry and Commerce for their generous support. Congratulations to the winners and all participants, whose five videos demonstrated impressive research, communication skills, and a profound engagement with Irish-German relations. Special thanks to Derek Scally for enriching the post-video discussions with his excellent questions and valuable insights.

Presentation on *Operation Shamrock* by Monica Brandis

On 26 September, Monica Brandis, author of *The Children of Operation Shamrock* (Trier: WVT, 2020; Irish-German Studies no 14) and PhD Student with the German Section, talked about **Operation Shamrock** which saw more than 400 German children being placed in the care of Irish families in 1946/47. Most of them were suffering from hunger, illness and war-related trauma. While a majority returned



Monica Brandis

to Germany after approximately three years, around 50 participants made Ireland their permanent home. Interviews with participants and Irish friends and family and analysis of documents and existing literature add to a more comprehensive understanding of the humanitarian initiative that is a major symbol of the friendship between Ireland and Germany. We are delighted that Monica has also started with a PhD on this topic in UL in 2024.

Krupps Exhibition

In October, we were delighted to collaborate with the Limerick Enterprise Development Partnership (LEDP) and Limerick Museum on an exhibition celebrating the German company **Krupps** and its significant role in Limerick's history. Established in 1964 and operating until the 1990s, Krups made a lasting contribution to the social and economic development of the region. The much-anticipated exhibition, "*Celebrating Krups, 25 Years On*" was launched on 10 October by German Ambassador-Designate to Ireland, H.E. Mr David Gill, at the former Krups building, now the

Dr Matthew Potter, Prof. Gisela Holfter, Dr Sharon Slater, Orla Prendergast, George Lee

LEDP campus on Roxboro Road. This exhibition honored Krups and its dedicated workforce, highlighting their impact on Limerick for over 35 years.

The exhibition, a brainchild of **George Lee** (LEDP) and put together by Dr **Sharon Slater** and Dr **Matthew Potter** (Limerick Museum) garnered

widespread interest, running for several weeks and even being extended due to popular demand. It was a fantastic opportunity to reflect on this important chapter of Limerick's industrial and cultural heritage. We are delighted to share a video we recorded of a conversation with a longterm Krups employee **Noel Curtin** on our website which provides fascinating insights into the working life at Krups – thanks very much, Noel!



GDI Annual Conference 2024



Campus Tour by Michaela Schrage-Friüh (centre) and Gisela Holfter (right)

The **GDI Annual Conference**, held in collaboration with the Centre for Irish-German Studies and the German Section at the University of Limerick, took place on Saturday, 9 November 2024, at the Kemmy Business School, University of Limerick.

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The conference featured two workshop cycles and guided tours, alongside stands showcasing PPLI and various publishers offering German textbooks.

During the first workshop cycle, Dr Anita Barmettler discussed strategies for incorporating pronunciation practice into lessons, while Natascha Guggi presented methods for teaching with digital materials from the resources-for-german.com website. The second workshop cycle featured Prof. Gisela Holfter, who discussed opportunities to encourage project work using “German Traces in Ireland”, and DAAD Lecturer Julia Weiss, who offered an overview of German improvisation theatre exercises for classroom use.

Participants also had the opportunity to visit UL’s excellent Language Learning Hub, explore the Arnold Schönberg exhibition organized by the Irish Austrian Society, and engage with representatives from the Goethe-Institut. The conference concluded with the GDI’s Annual General Meeting in the afternoon.

Special thanks to Maria Braun for her excellent coordination of the event. We look forward to working with the new GDI board!

Germanecdotes: Tales from 25 Years on the Frontline by Derek Scally

On Thursday 14 November, we had the incredible opportunity to host **Derek Scally**, renowned journalist from *The Irish Times*, for a captivating event. With over 25 years of experience living and reporting from Berlin, Derek shared his unique perspective on Irish-German relations and life as an Irish insider in Germany.



Derek Scally

From major historical events to the subtleties of everyday life, Derek

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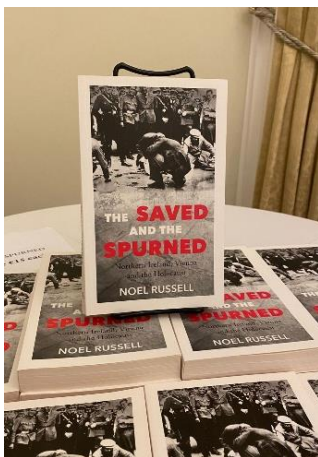
skilfully wove together the rich tapestry of stories and perspectives he encountered through decades of interviews and reporting. A huge thank you to Derek for sharing his stories and to everyone who joined us for this memorable event!

Book Launch *The Saved and the Spurned* by Noel Russell

On 14 November, we also had the privilege of hosting Noel Russell's lecture about Austrian refugees coming to Ireland and the **book launch of his groundbreaking book, *The Saved and the Spurned*** (New Island, 2024). This remarkable work provides the first comprehensive account of how the Northern Ireland government responded to Jewish appeals for help on the eve of the Holocaust—a critical yet often overlooked chapter of history.



H.E. Mag. Melitta Schubert, Noel Russell, Prof. Gisela Holfter



The book was officially launched by Austrian Ambassador H.E. Melitta Schubert, whose presence added special significance to the occasion. The event offered profound insights into the political and humanitarian dynamics of the time, sparking meaningful discussions about responsibility, memory, and the lessons history can teach us today. Thank you to Noel Russell for sharing his extensive research, to Ambassador Schubert for her thoughtful contribution, and to everyone who joined us for this special evening.

Official Launch of the Gottschalk Collection

The Centre for Irish-German Studies was thrilled to welcome **Traute Gottschalk** and her sons, Christof and Martin, on 15 November for the official launch of the Gottschalk Collection. Acquired by the Glucksman Library's Special Collections and Archives in 2019, the collection contains a wealth of material



Gisela Holfter, Ken Bergin, Ciara McCaffrey, Christof Gottschalk, Traute Gottschalk, Martin Gottschalk, Dr Sandra Joyce, Matthias Fleckenstein

related to Ireland's literature, culture, art, and music, both past and present. Key items include rare early editions of works by iconic authors such as James Joyce, Oscar Wilde, and Jonathan Swift, as well as contemporary writers like Roddy Doyle, Maeve Binchy, and Joseph O'Connor. A standout piece is *Hibernici, ordinis minorum doctoris*, a rare 1518 theology book believed to have been written by a Franciscan priest from Limerick, Malachy.

The collection was a generous donation from Celtic scholar **Jürgen Gottschalk**, founder of the Würzburg Irish-German Society, who dedicated much of his life to fostering Irish-German cultural and scholarly ties. **Matthias Fleckenstein**, Jürgen Gottschalk's successor as president of the Irish-German Society in Würzburg, also attended and spoke about his predecessor's many achievements. The event was also covered in German media (*Main Post*, 29 November 2024 "Aus Liebe zu Irland: Bücher und andere Druckerzeugnisse" and online: <https://www.mainpost.de/regional/wuerzburg/aus-liebe-zu-irland->

[art-11660293](#)). While Jürgen Gottschalk sadly passed away in October 2019, his collection, arguably the largest existing private German book collection on Ireland, will serve many readers, students and scholars coming from a variety of academic disciplines and interests.

21st International Conference of the Centre for Irish-German Studies (CIGS) & Annual German Studies Association of Ireland (GSAI):

Organised by the Centre for Irish-German Studies, University of Limerick in coordination with the German Studies Association of Ireland (GSAI) and the DAAD (German Academic Exchange Service), the conference took place at the Glucksman Library, University of Limerick, 15-16 November 2024. The conference was entitled 'German Studies in Ireland Today and Tomorrow – Perspectives, Challenges and Opportunities'. Keynotes in the



session "German Studies – Eine internationale Bestandsaufnahme" were chaired by Associate Prof. Marieke Krajenbrink (UL) with talks by Prof. Jan Süselbeck (Trondheim, Norway) and Dr Britta Bendieck (Duitsland Instituut Amsterdam & Universiteit van Amsterdam). The prognosis in both countries was presented as

being quite bleak; both countries are seeing cuts to university budgets while at the same time facing a decline in the number of students learning German at Third Level. The conference featured several insightful sessions. The "New Developments in Digital

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Language Learning" session was chaired by Dr Anita Barmettler (UL) with speakers including Associate Prof. Veronica O'Regan (UL) & Prof. Christiane Brand (TH Köln), Dr Una Carthy (ATU), and Natascha Guggi & Prof. Gisela Holfter (UL). The "German Studies in Ireland and the UK – Eine Standortbestimmung" roundtable was chaired by GSAI Co-Chairs Dr Linda Shortt (Maynooth) and Dr Michaela Schrage-Früh (UL) and featured Alexander Bleistein (DAAD London), Prof. Mary Cosgrove (TCD), and Associate Prof. Christiane Schönfeld (MIC). Keynotes in the "German Studies – Eine internationale Bestandsaufnahme" session were chaired by Associate Prof. Marieke Krajenbrink (UL) with talks by Prof. Jan Süselbeck (Trondheim, Norway) and Dr Britta Bendieck (Duitsland Instituut Amsterdam & Universiteit van Amsterdam). The official day concluded with an online reading by Roman Ehrlich and the book launch of *Germanistik in Irland*, followed by the conference dinner which included appreciations of colleagues who have retired this year, including Prof. Hans-Walter Schmidt-Hannisa (University of Galway), Prof. Jürgen Barkhoff (Trinity College Dublin) and Prof. Jean Conacher (University of Limerick).

On Saturday, the "Inner, Outer and Future Worlds" session was chaired by Prof. Hans-Walter Schmidt-Hannisa (University of Galway) with talks by Dr Thomas Wilks (University of Galway) and Prof. Anne Fuchs (UCD). The "Cultures in Contact" session was chaired by Dr Deirdre Byrnes (University of Galway) and featured Monica Brandis (UL) and Associate Prof. Gillian Pye (UCD). The final session, "Visions of German Studies in Ireland in the Future," was chaired by Prof. Emerita Eda Sagarra (TCD) with contributions from H.E. Melitta Schubert (Austrian Ambassador), Wolfram von Heynitz (German Cultural Attaché), Alexander Kruckenfellner (Deputy Director Goethe Institut), Simon Dauber (President German-Irish Chamber of Industry and Commerce), Joanne Hession (GDI), and Alexander Bleistein (DAAD).

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Launch of resources-for-german.com / Strand 2 and 1

The official launch of resources-for-german.com took place on 15 November 2024, as part of the 21st CIGS conference. This new website, introduced by Prof. Gisela Holfter and Natascha Guggi, provides valuable resources for German language learners and educators. Primarily designed for third-level students and teachers, it also offers useful materials for post-primary educators, starting at CEFR level A2. The site includes annotated link lists, classroom-ready materials, and additional exercises and tests for self-study. All resources are organized by topic and level, according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages, and are freely available. The website was developed as part of the DAAD-funded project *Exploring the Past, Enhancing the Current Position, and Working Towards 250 Years of German Studies in Ireland* (2022-2024), led by Prof. Gisela Holfter (CIGS, UL), Dr Joseph Twist (UCD), Associate Prof. Marieke Krajenbrink (UL), Dr Linda Shortt (MU), Associate Prof. Michaela Schrage-Früh (UL), and Research Assistant Natascha Guggi (UL). Feedback from both learners and teachers has been overwhelmingly positive.

Additionally, we highlight Strand 1 of the 2022-2024 DAAD project, which resulted in the 2023 publication of *Rückblicke und Reflexionen: A History of German Studies in Ireland*. This volume includes reflections from over thirty academics across nineteen Irish

universities and Institutes of Technology, offering a comprehensive look at the history and development of German Studies in Ireland, a field first introduced at third-level institutions in 1776 in TCD.

GILBA Awards 2024

The GILBA Awards 2024 (German-Irish Lawyer and Business Association) took place on 16 November at the University of Limerick's Glucksman Library. The event started with a warm welcome from Dr **Michael Hördt**, **Orla Prendergast** and Prof. **Gisela Holfter**. Attendees enjoyed insightful talks, for example on marketing in the Irish-German context by Prof. **Deirdre O'Loughlin** and about the 2024 European Parliament elections in Ireland by Dr **Patricia Conlan**. The day concluded with a prize-giving ceremony, performed by **Wolfram von Heynitz** and **Simon Dauber**, celebrating the achievements of the successful students from Cork, Galway, UCD, UL, and Trinity.



Michael Hördt & Orla Prendergast

DAAD/OeAD Netzwerktreffen

On Saturday, the 16th of November, DAAD lecturers and assistants, OeAD lecturers, and the Austrian Ambassador to Ireland, H.E. Mag. Melitta Schubert, met for a guided tour of Limerick. Under the slogan “Limerick: Between Heinrich Böll and Limerick 2030,” our lecturers Julia and Johannes and our assistant Paula showed our guests the most important sights of the city. In the afternoon, they also hosted a networking event for lecturers and assistants in Ireland. The goal was to strengthen cooperation between different institutions in Ireland, as well as between DAAD and OeAD lecturers.

Online Seminar *How to Get from the PhD to the Book* by Dr Hilary Potter

We were thrilled to host an online seminar by Dr **Hilary Potter** on Saturday, 16 November 2024, for an insightful talk on her latest work, *How to Get from the PhD to the Book*. This event was open to all PhD students in German in Ireland, providing guidance for those on the journey from doctoral research to publication.

Dr Potter's presentation covered the rationale and approach behind her book, offering a clear roadmap for transforming a PhD thesis into a publishable manuscript.

The feedback from attendees was overwhelmingly positive, highlighting the practical advice and supportive atmosphere of the session. We look forward to more events like this in the future, where we can continue to support postgraduate students in the discipline.

Dännerstag - A Bilingual Poetry Reading

On Thursday, 21 November 2024, the bilingual (Irish-German) poetry reading event **Dännerstag** took place at the University of Limerick, sponsored by Foras na Gaeilge and supported by Aonad na Gaeilge. This event, a play on the Irish word “dán” (poem) and the German “Donnerstag” (Thursday), was first organized in 2021 by Gisela Holfter and Sorcha de Brún with German, Austrian and Swiss poets with wonderful videos that are still available on our website (<https://www.ul.ie/artsoc/irish-german/dannerstag>). This year, two Irish poets, **Áine Ní Ghlinn**



Gisela Holfter, Áine Ní Ghlinn,
Laoighseach Ní Choistealbha and Sorcha
de Brún



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and **Laoighseach Ní Choistealbha**, shared their work. Áine Ní Ghlinn read poems about child abuse, displacement, and dementia. Laoighseach Ní Choistealbha presented poems from her collection “Baile an Eibhir,” exploring cultural shock and the nuances of Irish culture. The poems were translated by Brian Ronayne. Special thanks him and to Ciara Considine and Aonad na Gaeilge! The videos of a subsequent reading on the Living Bridge will be presented on the CIGS website in the near future – thanks to Lara Walser, Paula Riese, video editor Ollie Phillips and especially Dr **Sorcha de Brún** who was the main organiser.

#languages250 - Mapping the Future of Higher Education at Queen’s University Belfast

Congratulations to Prof. **Janice Carruthers** and Prof. **Isabel Torres** for organising a fantastic event on “Mapping the Future of Higher Education” on 29 November 2024 at Queen's University. The selection of speakers was excellent and included several headmasters, policy makers, businesspeople, academics and students. All contributed with thoughtful and knowledgeable statements, creating a lively debate that will hopefully continue and see some of the roadblocks and inequalities that languages face (even more in the North than in the South) removed, and some suggestions picked up and further developed. The next instalment of the series which started in the RIA last December will be a Limerick event on 28 November 2025, jointly organised by Associate Prof. Sabine Egger (MIC) and Prof. Gisela Holfter (UL) (see more info under upcoming events).

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4th UL – UU International Conference: Reflections on a Changing Ireland and its Relationships



H.E. David Gill and Prof. Paul Carmichael

The fourth UL-UU conference, held in Belfast this year following previous events in Limerick (2021), Belfast (2022), and Limerick (2023), was once again a thought-provoking and very successful gathering. Supported by KAS UK & Ireland and the Wilfried Martens Centre for European Studies, the conference opened with remarks from local host Prof. **Paul Carmichael**, German Ambassador H.E. **David Gill**, Dr **Eoin Drea** from the Martens Centre and Dr **Canan Altigan**, the newly appointed director of KAS London, who reaffirmed her organisation's commitment to the UL-UU collaboration.

The first session, chaired by Prof. Pól Ó Dochartaigh, focused on “Relationships within a Changing Northern Ireland,” featuring speakers Dr Jamie Pow, Emma De Souza, David Sterling, and Alan Whysall. The following session, “The Cultural Context and its Impact on Changing Relationships and Identities,” was chaired by Prof. Liam Murray and included writer Jan Carson, school



Kevin McAreyve, David Rane and Neasa Ní Chianáin

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principal Kevin McAreevey of *Young Plato* fame, filmmaker Neasa Ní Chianáin and Alex Bleistein (deputy director of the DAAD London).

The roundtable on “Irish Relationships in a Changed Europe,” chaired by Prof. Joachim Fischer, included Sam McBride, Katy Haskins, John McGrane, and Katherine Meenan. On Friday, the “North-South Relationships” session, chaired by Dr Claire Wright (UU), featured Mark Durkan, Catriona Mullan, Hilary Reilly, and Richard Hill. The “West-East Relationships” session, chaired by Prof. Paul Carmichael, included Mark Hennessy, Etain Tannam, and Anthony Soares. The final session, “Changing Relationships in Historical Perspective,” was a roundtable of politicians, chaired by David Donoghue, with participants including John Gormley (Green Party), Claire Hanna (SDLP), Declan Kearney (SF), Nuala MacAlister (Alliance Party), and Peter Martin (DUP).



David Donoghue, Nuala MacAlister (Alliance Party), John Gormley (Green Party), Declan Kearney (SF), Peter Martin (DUP), Claire Hanna (SDLP)



Organisers Gisela Holfter & Paul Carmichael after the conference

The conference highlighted the continued interest in dialogue and the valuable exchanges fostered by the established framework.

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Christmas Reception

On 5 December, the Centre hosted its annual Christmas Reception in Plassey House at UL. We were delighted to welcome numerous

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members and friends. Christmas carols were sung, there was a Christmas quiz organised by students and even Knecht Ruprecht and St Nicholas paid us a visit! It was a lovely get-together, with delicious treats and plenty of good conversations.

"Why Learn German" Video Series: A Highlight of the Year

Another key aspect of the DAAD project has been the "Why Learn German" video series on www.resources-for-german.com. This series features 24 videos with a wide variety of voices, each presenting compelling reasons to learn German. Contributors include academics, artists, journalist Derek Scally (*Irish Times*), ambassadors such as former Austrian Ambassador to Ireland Dr Thomas Nader and Dr Nicholas O'Brien, former Irish Ambassador to Germany, as well as business leaders like Simon Dauber from Allianz and Liam Ryan from SAP. Each video is designed to inspire potential students by showcasing the practical and real-world benefits of learning German. The content is perfect for recruitment campaigns by schools and universities, offering a dynamic way to motivate and engage new learners, helping them highlight the professional and personal advantages of German proficiency. We encourage everyone to explore the "Why Learn German" video series on resources-for-german.com.

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UPCOMING EVENTS

In March 2025 we are looking forward to welcoming acclaimed German writer **Ingo Schulze**, the current president of the Deutsche Akademie für Sprache und Dichtung in UL.

On 15 April 2025, East-German singer **Gerhard Gundermann** will be commemorated in an Irish-German, DAAD & CIGS-sponsored day of events in Limerick City. Acclaimed filmmaker **Andreas Dresen** will attend a screening of his feature film GUNDERMANN in the Belltable theatre (69 O'Connell Street, Limerick) in the afternoon. There will be a panel discussion and Q&A following the film with Andreas Dresen and singer/songwriter and Reader in Music Dr **David Robb** (Queens, Belfast), who translated Gundermann's songs into English. Dave and his band will perform their Gundermann songs in the Belltable that evening (for further information, please contact christiane.schonfeld@mic.ul.ie).

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5-7 June 2025: international **Movens conference in German Studies**: “Anfänge und Entwicklungen: Beiträge zur Fachgeschichte der Germanistik und darüber hinaus” with colleagues in Slovenia, Sweden, Germany and the UK, building on the Movens network of German scholars where UL has been a founding member, see <https://www.movensnetwork.org/movens-netzwerk.html>. A special feature of the conferences are one-to-one Masterclasses for PhD students with experienced international academics in German Studies.

On 4 July 2025 we will have a one-day **colloquium** organised together with Siemens Ireland, to mark 100 years of the beginning of the hydro-electric power station and the passing of the Shannon Electricity Act on 4 July 1925.

On 28 November 2025 there will be the third instalment of the “Towards 250 years of Modern Languages at Third-level” series, coordinated by an Advisory Board and supported by all Irish universities and many Dublin-based European cultural institutes and embassies. Tánaiste Micheál Martin spoke at the inaugural event in December 2022 in the Royal Irish Academy as did high-profile speakers from across a range of sectors, including education, business, technology, science and diplomacy. On 29 November this year, we had the excellent event on “Mapping the Future in Higher Education” in Queen’s University Belfast mentioned above, organized by Professors Janice Carruthers and Isabel Torres. Next year it will be a jointly organised event of UL and MIC, before the final instalment in TCD in 2026. For more information, please get in touch with Sabine.Egger@mic.ul.ie and Gisela.Holfter@ul.ie.

A lot to look forward to – here’s hoping 2025 will be another good year for Irish-German relations!

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