



# HISTORY

Newsletter | Summer 2012



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## WELCOME

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Welcome to the first issue of what the History Department intends to be annual communication with its former students. Our intention is to keep you informed of what we do, both in the classroom and in our research activities – but also to let you know about public events organized by the department to which all alumni are warmly invited.

Among the events arranged for 2013 are a key note lecture by Professor Steven Ellis (NUI Galway) to mark the 500th anniversary of the death of Gearóid Mór, the 'Great Earl' of Kildare. This will be held in September. Planning is also underway for the annual Holocaust lecture to be delivered by Jay Winter (Yale) in February 2013 (on 'Primo Levi as Moral Witness of Holocaust') and for a lecture to mark the inauguration of the newly established Centre for Early Modern Studies, this will be given in December 2012 (on the history of news) by Professor Andrew Pettegree (St Andrews). Please let us know if you would like to attend any of these events – and we will notify you of details closer to the time. We are also keen to learn your views about this Newsletter. So please email comments to [hsthum@tcd.ie](mailto:hsthum@tcd.ie).

*Dr David Ditchburn, Head of Department*

## MESSAGE FROM THE HEAD OF SCHOOL

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One of the most important developments of recent years has been the formation of the School of Histories and Humanities in 2005, in which History joined forces with Classics, History of Art and the Centre for Gender and Women's Studies. This was a coming together of willing allies that slightly pre-dated the College's restructuring programme. The departments in our school continue to operate their own degrees and activities under a Head of Department, but there is a School Executive Committee overseeing separate committees for Research, Postgraduate Teaching and Learning and Undergraduate Teaching and Learning. That may sound like a lot of committees, but all of them conduct business relevant only to us (as opposed to big central College committees), and even (or especially) long-standing members of staff find that there has been a big improvement in the quality of academic discussion. It has all developed into an extremely effective and strong alliance. The first Head of School was Jane Ohlmeyer, Erasmus Smith's Professor of Modern History (2005-8), who did a wonderful job of pulling everything together. She was followed by Roger Stalley, Professor of the History of Art (2008-2010) and recently myself. We have been very lucky in having, since the beginning, the same (and outstanding) Administrative Officer, Dr Debra Birch. We also have excellent colleagues in our IT officer, Pat Carty and our Extra-mural director, Patricia Stapleton.

*Brian McGing, Regius Professor of Greek, Head of School of History and Humanities*

## RECENT EVENTS

### UNDOING THE DAMAGE

#### CIRCLE: A CALENDAR OF IRISH CHANCERY LETTERS, c.1244–1509

By Peter Crooks

*Those precious records, which would have been so useful to the future historian, have been devoured by the flames or scattered in fragments by the four winds of heaven.*

So runs a lament in the *Irish Times* of 3 July 1922, three days after the explosion in the Public Record Office at the Four Courts that destroyed much of Ireland's documentary heritage. Among the most important records destroyed were the rolls of the medieval Irish chancery which dated from the thirteenth century. The chancery was the secretariat of the kings of England and responsible for issuing letters in the king's name under the great seal of Ireland. Copies of many of these outgoing letters were transcribed painstakingly by the chancery clerks on to long rolls of parchment known as the 'chancery rolls'. These chancery rolls suffered several disasters before the cataclysm of 1922, often because of inadequate storage facilities. On the eve of the Reformation the archbishop of Dublin sneered that the chancery in Dublin Castle was 'more like a swine-sty than a stable'. Yet, despite the damp and neglect, and the nibbling of vermin, some 123 chancery rolls from the later thirteenth century were still extant in the early twentieth century. Every one of these rolls was destroyed in the Four Courts blaze.

Launched in May, a new internet resource CIRCLE goes some way towards mitigating the effects of 1922 for medieval Irish studies. CIRCLE (=A *Calendar of Irish Chancery Letters, c. 1244–1509*) is the chief output of the Irish Chancery Project, a three-year project based at TCD and funded by the Irish Research Council for the Humanities and Social Sciences. Its aim has been to reconstruct the lost chancery rolls dating from 1244 to 1509. But although the current phase of the project began in 2008, it was originally the brainchild Jocelyn Otway-Ruthven, the formidable Lecky Professor of History at Trinity between 1951 and 1980. Work on the reconstruction first got underway in the 1970s and was to have occupied Otway-Ruthven in her retirement. Illness intervened. In the 1980s the project passed to Professor James Lydon and a massive paper database was compiled using thousands of colour-coded index cards scrawled with references to chancery letters destroyed in 1922. Finally in 1992 a trial reconstruction of a single chancery roll for 1374-5 was published by Margaret Murphy and Elizabeth Dowth. It was the culmination of a decade's work. But several hundred more chancery rolls

remained to be published. Lydon retired in 1993 and, although the project was revived by Dr Philomena Connolly, Senior Archivist in the National Archives of Ireland, she passed away in 2002 before work could be completed. So it has taken some four decades and a series of editors, working in fits and starts, to bring the calendar to the point of publication.



*'The Formidable Ot': Professor Jocelyn Otway-Ruthven, Lecky Professor of History (1951-80)*

How have the letters been reconstructed? The sources on which CIRCLE is based range in date from the fourteenth to nineteenth centuries and are located in various countries and continents. Two classes of material were particularly important.

The first is comprised of copies of Irish chancery letters sent during the Middle Ages to the English government based at Westminster. Equally important are transcripts and calendars made by Irish antiquarians from the seventeenth to the early nineteenth centuries. These sources, mostly in Latin, have been translated into English and linked to a digitized version of the Latin calendar of the Irish patent and close rolls published by the Record Commission of Ireland in 1828—a volume which provides the spine of the reconstruction process because it shows us the structure of the original rolls.

When CIRCLE went live it contained approximately 20,000 letters. A three-volume print edition will then be published by the Irish Manuscripts Commission in 2013. The CIRCLE website also provides access to an unparalleled collection of digital images of original Irish chancery letters. The image collection is made of 'engrossments'—that is, the actual letters issued by the chancery as opposed to the 'enrolment' which is the copy of the same letter on the chancery roll—, which survive in various archives. It is hoped that this digital collection will become a standard teaching aid for students of palaeography and that this in turn will stimulate further work on late medieval Ireland.

What of the letters themselves? Well, they are extraordinarily rich and varied in content and should become a staple for many kinds of researcher—political historians obviously, but also historians of society, economy, settlement and gender, as well as genealogists, historical geographers and archaeologists. The letters include appointments to high office, grants of lands and charters to towns. They allow us to trace the descent of landed estates and the lineages of families. They reveal the interactions between the Dublin government and Gaelic chiefs. They show armies on the march, prisoners being ransomed, castles being razed, tower houses being built. Merchants are found seeking licences to trade with Prussia, Portugal, France and Spain. Men and women of Gaelic origin, normally excluded from the benefits of English law, purchase letters granting liberty from their 'Irish servitude'. Individual letters offers micro-histories, such as the chancellor who absconds with the great seal of Ireland or the countess of Kildare who complains to the king that reports of her death are greatly exaggerated. In sum, these seemingly dry administrative records throw a flood of light on this most fascinating yet under-studied era of Irish history.



*Chancery Project Launch, May 2012: Professor Seán Duffy (Chancery Project Advisory Board); Dr Peter Crooks (Principal Editor CIRCLE); Professor Patrick Prendergast (Provost); Professor David Ditchburn (Head of Department of History and Principal Investigator, Chancery Project).*

## R.B. MCDOWELL

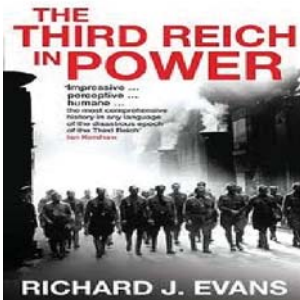


Most of us have very happy memories of R B McDowell from our days in College and other times. He was somebody who will never be repeated.

The Provost of Trinity College Dublin and the Department of History have proposed to commemorate RB by establishing a Professorship in Anglo/Irish History in his honour – a subject on which he was a world authority.

A number of friends have already generously supported the initiative and the university has committed to the professorship in perpetuity subject to achieving the target figure. You are invited to contribute. Gifts qualify for full tax relief in the ROI, UK, US and Canada. To find out more or make a contribution contact: [Simon.Williams@simong.williams@tcd.ie](mailto:Simon.Williams@simong.williams@tcd.ie) or + 353 87 9230056

## HOLOCAUST LECTURE 2012



Richard J Evans, Professor of History at the University of Cambridge, delivered the 2012 Holocaust Annual Lecture - an event organized jointly by Alan Kramer of TCD's Department of History and by the Herzog Centre for Jewish and Near Eastern Religion and Culture.

Evans is a leading authority on modern German history. His work is characterized by a willingness to engage with both

social and anthropological theory and with literary evidence, as well by its solid archival basis. Evans's many books include *The Coming of the Third Reich* (2003), *The Third Reich in Power* (2005) and *The Third Reich at War* (2007). He was to act as principal expert witness in the David Irving libel trial, heard by the High Court in London in 2000. Since then Holocaust denial and the broader matter of history in the courtroom has featured in his work – most notably in *Telling Lies about Hitler: History, the Holocaust and the David Irving Trial* (2002).

The Holocaust Lecture series has now been running for several years. It has always attracted top-ranking speakers, including in 2006 Peter Longerich, author of an acclaimed biography of Joseph Goebbels and in 2008 Christopher Browning, most famously author of *Ordinary Men: Reserve Police Battalion 101 and the Final Solution in Poland*. The last speaker, in 2010, was Jan Gross of Princeton, author of the controversial *Neighbors: The Destruction of the Jewish Community in Jedwabne, Poland*.

## IRELAND AND THE FALKLANDS WAR, 1982 WITNESS SEMINAR 2012

A seminar which brought together researchers and persons with direct knowledge of the Falklands War was recently held in Trinity. British and Irish participants included Lord (Robert) Armstrong, former Head of the British Civil Service, who

presented an overview of British reactions to the Falklands policy of the then Irish government. The seminar was hosted by the Centre for Contemporary Irish History and its head Professor Eunan O'Halpin.



Brian Stewart; Sir David Goodall; Provost, Dr Patrick Prendergast; Lord Armstrong; Dr Martin Mansergh; Professor Eunan O'Halpin; and Noel Dorr, former Irish Ambassador to the UN.

## STAFF NEWS

### NEW LECTURER IN INDIAN STUDIES

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January 2011 saw the arrival of Mridu Rai as the Department's newly appointed Lecturer in Indian Studies. With degrees from Miranda University, Delhi University, Jawaharlal Nehru University and a doctorate from Columbia University in New York, Dr Rai previously held teaching appointments in the USA, at Tufts University, at Bowdoin College and most recently at Yale University. She is the author of *Hindu Rulers, Muslim Subjects: Islam, Rights and the History of Kashmir* and also of various essays published in books and academic journals. Her current research focuses on questions of caste and violence in South Asia, and this is set within the wider context of new ideas about community, territory and nation in the north of modern India.

On the teaching side, Dr Rai began to offer Junior Freshman students an introduction to the history of South Asia within days of her arrival in Dublin. She also delivers a List 1 Special Subject, entitled 'South Asia since 1947: The Making of Postcolonial Societies', and a List 3 special subject, 'The Making of Colonial Subjects'. Aside from teaching duties in History, Dr Rai also offers classes to Senior Freshman students in History of Art – and she is already collaborating with specialists in other disciplines to promote greater awareness of South Asia more generally.

### CONGRATULATIONS

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Dr Colin Veitch (PhD, 2009) has been appointed to a permanent Lectureship in Medieval History at the University of Hull. Dr Edda Frakot, who was employed in the Department as a researcher on the 1641 Depositions Project, has now been appointed to a permanent Lectureship in Medieval History at the Erasmus University in Rotterdam. Jane

Ohlmeyer, the Erasmus Smith's Professor of Modern History, has been placed in charge of the College's Global Relations. She will be replaced in the Department for the next three years by Dr Susan Flavin, a specialist in Anglo-Irish trade of the sixteenth century.

### LECTURE SERIES IN AMERICAN HISTORY

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The first Annual Lecture in American History was held on 28 March 2011. The event was organized by Daniel Geary (*below, right*), Mark Pigott Lecturer in American History at TCD, and the lecture itself was delivered by James Kloppenberg, Charles Warren Professor of History at Harvard (*below, left*). Kloppenberg spoke on the topic of 'Barack Obama and the American Democratic Tradition' to a packed audience which included many TCD alumni, as well as students and staff. Kloppenberg also participated in a special seminar for Sophister History students during which students were able to discuss Kloppenberg's publications.

Before the lecture alumni attended a reception organized by the Department in the brand new Long Room Hub Building. The occasion provided a great opportunity for graduates to reacquire themselves with former teachers and friends.

## BOOKSHELF

### A KINGDOM UNITED

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Dr Catriona Pennell, Lecturer in History at the University of Exeter, has just published a ground-breaking study on popular responses to the outbreak of the First World War - a time before the public opinion surveys that we take for granted today even existed.

*A Kingdom United* (Oxford University Press, 2012) draws from a vast array of diaries, journals and newspapers to provide a compelling picture of some of the thoughts, views and conversations of British and Irish people on the outbreak of war. The book challenges preconceptions and assumptions about how

ordinary people and elite figures reacted to events and pays special attention to the question of Ireland, demonstrating how the majority of Irish people supported the war and were united in the British cause.

Catriona was recipient of the R.B. McDowell Ussher Fellowship, granted by the Trinity Trust, 2003 – 2006, when she was a PhD student at Trinity College Dublin, under the supervision of Professor John Horne. The book was officially launched by Professor Horne at the London Irish Centre, Camden Square, on 23 March 2012.

Further details of the book, including sample extracts, are available at the Oxford University Press website.

### MAKING IRELAND ENGLISH: THE IRISH ARISTOCRACY IN THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY

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*Making Ireland English: The Irish Aristocracy in the Seventeenth Century* by Erasmus Smith's Professor of Modern History and Vice-Provost for Global Relations, Jane Ohlmeyer, which was recently launched in Trinity's Long Room, is the first comprehensive study of the remaking of Ireland's aristocracy during the seventeenth century.

The book is a study of the Irish peerage and its role in the establishment of English control over Ireland. Professor Ohlmeyer's research in the archives of the era yields a major new understanding of early Irish and British elite, and offers fresh perspectives on the experiences of the Irish, English, and Scottish lords in wider British and continental contexts.

*Making Ireland English* examines the resident aristocracy as a collective of ninety one families, not simply 311 individuals, and demonstrates how a reconstituted peerage of mixed faith and ethnicity assimilated the established Catholic aristocracy. Tracking the impact of colonisation, civil war, and other significant factors on the fortunes of the peerage in Ireland, Prof Ohlmeyer arrives at a fresh assessment of the key accomplishment of the new Irish elite: making Ireland English.

Professor Ohlmeyer is an expert on the New British and Atlantic Histories and has published extensively on early modern Irish and British history. She is also the author of *Civil War and Restoration in the Three Stuart Kingdoms* and *Ireland from Independence to Occupation*.

### NEW TCD EDITOR OF *IHS*

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Dr Robert Armstrong has taken over as the new editor of Ireland's leading historical publication, *Irish Historical Studies*. Robert is Senior Lecturer in the Department and a specialist in the seventeenth-century history of Ireland and Britain His book, *Protestant war: The British of Ireland and the Wars of the Three Kingdoms* was published by Manchester University Press in 2005.

# THANK YOU

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The Department is now undertaking a new programme of expansion with philanthropic support to create new posts. We are very grateful to Mark Pigott for establishing a Lectureship in US History and to the Indian community which funds the new post in Indian Studies. We are now seeking funding for a post in Medieval History, to complement our stunning collection of medieval manuscripts; and for a professorial chair in Anglo-Irish History, to be named after R.B. McDowell.

We would like to thank our alumni who generously supported the School of Histories & Humanities through the alumni appeal and

phone campaign. The Department of History will use the generous alumni donations to provide travel bursaries to assist 12 Ph.D. students to attend a specially organised conference, designed specifically for doctoral students, in Scotland. We are very grateful for your support.

We would also like to thank UK-based graduates who have funded a series of intensive research seminars.

# KEEP IN TOUCH

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We intend to communicate with you more regularly, updating you on what has been happening in History at Trinity and also to keep you informed about our future plans.

We also encourage you to keep in touch with the Department and encourage you to update your contact details by logging onto [www.tcd.ie/alumni/update](http://www.tcd.ie/alumni/update).

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