



Legacies Review Working Group

22 November 2024

Arts Building 2026

Present: Eoin O’Sullivan (Chair), Aidan Marsh (Secretary), Jenny Maguire (SU), Evi Numen (HS), Daniel Bradley (STEM), Rachel Moss (IFUT), Helen Shenton (Librarian), Catherine O’Mahony (Communications), Sinead McBride (College Solicitor), Ciaran O’Neill (TCL), Patrick Walsh (TCL), Catriona Crowe, Lynn Scarff (NMI)

Apologies: Hamza Bana (SU), Aashana Yadav (SU), Francis O’Toole (AHSS), Siobhán Ward (HS), Kevin Byrne, Francis Hendron (UNITE), David Quinn (Craft Unions), Cliona O’Farrelly (Fellows), Linda Hogan (AVPEDI), David O’Shea (TDA)

TLRWF/24-25/006 Introduction and review of activities in 2024 and updates

A series of events, including a film and an exhibition, is being planned by the Library with the formal renaming expected to take place around the start of February. While work is underway to have the new name installed on the building, it may not be possible to have the planning permission in time for the ceremony. It was also noted that Nationwide have approached College about the possibility of producing a half hour special on the Library. The family are delighted to assist in the project as due to Covid-19 there had been no means to commemorate Boland when she died.

The English Department or Long Room Hub are interested in organising a symposium on Boland, to potentially include public readings of her poetry by female poets. There is a short film on Boland’s life, which the director is happy to be shown at such an event.

Overall, the decision to rename the Library after Boland has been well received within the College Community.

TLRWF/24-25/007 Working Paper on the Trinity Estates

Patrick Walsh gave a presentation on the history of Trinity College as an owner of estates around Ireland.

Acknowledgement of estates and links to colonial legacies is something being addressed by Universities around the world. It may be suitable for the working group to examine ways of commemorating this legacy in Trinity, acknowledging the environmental, financial, and social impact that College had on the areas where it was engaged in land ownership.

The Trinity Estates in County Kerry were highlighted as a useful example of College’s land ownership as these lands were administered by Board, and there is a significant amount of detailed records regarding these estates. Records from the Famine period show that the situation on these estates was comparatively worse when compared to neighbouring estates, and as a case study on colonialism it is possible to see the impact that College had on the region from economic, cultural, and linguistic perspectives

While the majority of the land was lost by 1923, College still owns, at least on paper, a number of properties from the old estates. College does not actively collect rent on many of these properties as the cost of collection is prohibitive, but a small sum still comes in. Requests are occasionally received from landlords to buy out the freehold, though these have not always been acceded to.

There was general consensus that the colonial history of the College by the medium of the Trinity Estates should be actively engaged with as a story that merits telling.

It was suggested that the possibility of commemorative exhibitions be explored, possibly in collaboration with local institutions and community groups. The possibility of memorialisation was also raised as a possible means of commemoration. It was recognised that any work must be cautious in its use of language of restoration, particularly regarding land held in Northern Ireland.

It was noted that the College and National Archives have an extensive amount of information that could be used in preparation for any sort of commemoration, and that there have been queries from local historical societies about getting access to the data. It was confirmed that there is a desire to digitise the documents to make them more open and accessible, however this is a slow process, though recent developments in the use of AI transcribers may assist in accelerating the work and the Library are keen to pursue this possibility.

There was brief discussion of lands still held by College, and whether any investigation has been undertaken as to what could be done to develop or divest from these areas.

TLRWF/24-25/008 The Trinity College Ethnographic Collections in the National Museum

Greine Jordan of the University of East Anglia, presented to the Committee on the Trinity College Ethnographic Collection in the National Museum.

There is little information presently on the provenance of the collection as the relevant catalogues are missing, however research is being undertaken in collaboration with the National Museum of Ireland (NMI) to rectify this, and to establish the full scope of the collection. It is also unknown as to whether there are any conditions or stipulation on College's possession of the items in the collection. The items are, at present, "on loan" to the NMI and the possibility of granting them in perpetuity is to be explored with the College Solicitor.

The possibility of an exhibition commemorating the collection is being explored.

TLRWF/24-25/009 AOB

A query has been received from a survivor of the Mother & Baby Home on Navan Road seeking information on burial sites in Glasnevin. It is recognised that College, along with other universities in Ireland, had been receiving bodies from the homes, and there is a transparent process underway regarding this. The requested information was confirmed to exist, and has been provided to the Irish Medical Council, however the legal office of College need to examine whether we would be able to release the information as comparative state records may be sealed.