



**Trinity Legacies Review Working Group**

**25 April 2025 at 14.30**

**Trinity Board Room**

**Apologies:** Jenny Maguire (SU), Hamza Bana (SU), Aashana Yadav (SU), Kevin Byrne (SIPTU), Francis Hendron (UNITE), David Quinn (Craft Unions), Cliona O'Farrelly (Fellows), Linda Hogan (VPEDI), David O'Shea (TDA), Sinead MacBride (College Solicitor), Lynn Scarff (NMI)

**TLRWF/24-25/010 Approval of the Minutes of the 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2024**

The minutes of 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2024 were approved.

**TLRWF/24-25/011 Trinity Tenants: Exploring TCDs history, legacies, and memorialisation of its role as a colonial landlord – presentation by Ciaran O'Neill (School of Histories and Humanities).**

Further to his presentation at the previous meeting of the Legacies Working Group, Dr Ciarán O'Neill presented to the Working Group on possible means for College to memorialise its historical estates and tenants, noting that they are currently unacknowledged in any official College histories, in the Calendar, on the campus, in the tourist offerings and in College life and rituals.

The Kerry estates have been examined as a pilot study, and it was suggested that the results of the study might be published on the Legacies website in a section devoted to this matter. It was also noted that the 1841 census of Trinity lands is more detailed than the state census of the period, and that this information could be made more publicly available through the Legacies website.

Other examples of suggestions for commemorating the estates included:

- Digitising all records relating to the estates
- Commission a fully interactive map of the estates for the Legacies Website
- Commission a video explainer for the College estates for the Legacies Website
- Curate a travelling exhibition on selected College Estates with public lectures in Co. Kerry and Co. Armagh, introducing the history of the Trinity estates to descendant communities and local history groups.
- Fund a symposium on the College estates to coincide with erection of a monument to the tenants
- Fund a PhD on Trinity's estates

Examples of suggestions for the memorialising of Trinity's Tenants included:

- Consider re-wording the 1627 Bedell Grace to include mention of the tenants
- Commission a monument to Trinity's Tenants in Front Square

It was noted that College does not have any financial liability related to historic estates, but that it could actively seek to divest remaining residual ground rents in Counties Down, Limerick and Dublin. It was also noted that there remain several other properties around Ireland.

The Working Group agreed that memorialisation of the estates and tenantry is appropriate as they were a major source of funding for College through to the 1890s and beyond, and that this would be recommended to Board. Forms that any memorialisation might take were deferred to a future meeting.

**TLRWF/24-25/012 Request from the Australian Department of Infrastructure etc, Repatriation and Maritime Museum Section, Collections and Cultural Heritage Branch for the repatriation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ancestral remains (ancestors) held in Trinity.**

Further to a visit from representatives of the Australian Embassy to the Old Anatomy Museum, a request has been received for the repatriation of remains of Aboriginal and Torres Strait islanders which College holds. These consist of two complete skeletons and a large collection of disarticulated bones. There are also several plaster casts taken from remains in other collections in Ireland and the UK. All information on these remains has been provided to the Australian Embassy and additional work is being undertaken to ensure information is correct.

The Working Group noted that there is large Haddon-Dixon representation among these remains following a visit by Haddon to the Torres Straits in 1889. It is believed likely that these remains were removed improperly, some with the assistance of the Australian government of the time.

Several discrepancies in the collection have been identified thus far, including confirmation that certain items do not originate in Australia. The largest potential discrepancy is the William Wilde collection. This is a small collection consisting of less than 10 crania and College possesses no clear evidence on whether these remains are Australian. Wilde never travelled to Australia, and there is no evidence as to their acquisition. It was noted that Dixon did not believe the crania were Australian, however this was based on inaccurate methodologies and cannot be assumed to be correct.

It was noted that genome sequencing could be used to identify the origin of any suspect remains, however it was also recognized that full co-operation with the Australian Embassy would be needed in order to undertake any such actions.

It was queried as to whether, in cases such as this where there are remains of identifiable origin, College can look into reaching out to initiate repatriation. Old Anatomy would like to engage in such activities, however at present it is difficult to engage on any significant scale due to insufficient resources.

A memo will be brought to Board in June regarding the repatriation of the Australian remains. The Working Group agreed that the memo should include arguments for increased resources to the Anatomy collections to allow for a greater level of proactive repatriation.

It was noted that the Curator of the Old Anatomy Museum would like to bring a matter of repatriation of Native American remains to the Working Group at a future meeting.

#### **TLRWF/24-25/013    Navan Road Mother & Baby Home Request**

An FOI has been submitted to College requesting information on the Navan Road Mother & Baby Home and any remains transferred to College. College holds the relevant records and will release all reasonable information.

It was discussed if the remains received from Mother & Baby Homes should be interred. The Working Group agreed that this would be appropriate, however several practical issues which would make this difficult to proceed with would first need to be overcome.

It was discussed if College should memorialise those whose remains were retained for medical research and teaching, recognizing that not all remains were contributed nor consensually donated. There was agreement from the Working Group that a memorial on the Dublin Medical School plot at Glasnevin would be appropriate, however it was acknowledged that more discussion would be needed. It was additionally recognised that a plaque will be placed on the new E3 Learning Centre to memorialise the remains that were found there during its construction.

#### **TLRWF/24-25/014    AOB**

There was no other business