



An Roinn Cultúir,
Cumarsáide agus Spóirt
Department of Culture,
Communications and Sport



Trinity College Dublin
Coláiste na Tríonóide, Baile Átha Cliath
The University of Dublin



Liberty, Democracy and the Struggle for Human Rights:

Tuesday 29 July – Wednesday 30 July, Trinity College Dublin

Daniel O'Connell 250 Conference



In proud partnership with
**THE BAR
OF IRELAND**
The Law Library
BARRA NA MBEIRINN
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DIAGEO
Ireland

EXPERIENCE
glasnevin
IRELAND'S NATIONAL CEMETERY

 **THE DANIEL O'CONNELL
SUMMER SCHOOL**

**Dublin
Cemeteries
Trust** Est. 1828

Trinity Long Room Hub
Arts & Humanities Research Institute

Organised by the Trinity Long Room Hub in partnership with The Bar of Ireland and Diageo, and in association with the School of Histories and Humanities, Dublin Cemeteries Trust, and the Daniel O'Connell Summer School (29-30 August).

TOP HAT BELONGING TO
DANIEL O'CONNELL

FROM THE RESEARCH COLLECTIONS IN THE
LIBRARY OF TRINITY COLLEGE DUBLIN
(TCD OBJECT/1972/ OBJECT BOX 30. GR 32)



WITH THANKS TO THE BOARD OF
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INTRODUCTION



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O'CONNELL 250 SYMPOSIUM: *LIBERTY, DEMOCRACY, AND THE STRUGGLE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS*

One of the greatest champions of freedom, democracy, and human rights, Daniel O'Connell provided a voice for the oppressed, wherever they were found in the world. Through his ideals and his legacy, he continues to do so.

To mark the 250th anniversary of the birth of O'Connell, we are delighted to bring together leading historians, human rights experts, and public figures to explore his life and global legacy. Over these two days we will also discuss challenges to human rights today, threats to democracy, and the lessons we can learn from a study of *The Liberator*.

This symposium is organised by the Trinity Long Room Hub, Trinity's flagship Arts and Humanities Research Institute, in partnership with The Bar of Ireland, and Diageo, and in association with the School of Histories and Humanities, The Daniel O'Connell Summer School (29-30 August 2025) and Glasnevin Cemetery (part of Dublin Cemeteries Trust).

We are also delighted to acknowledge the generous support of the Department of Culture, Communications and Sport, and the Government of Ireland. This is the first of a series of events planned over the next five years, as the Trinity Long Room Hub commemorates and explores the great achievements of two hundred years ago when O'Connell led a peaceful, mass political movement and won civil and political rights for Irish Catholics, before finally taking his seat in parliament in 1830 and beginning the second great phase of his career to try to Repeal the Act of Union.

Day 1

Tuesday 29 July 2025

Edmund Burke Theatre, Arts Block, Trinity College Dublin, 1 p.m.

Session 1: *O'Connell at 250: Legacies, Inspirations and Challenges.*



Sir Donnell Deeny

Pro Chancellor of the University of Dublin.

Chair



Professor Patrick Geoghegan

Director of the Trinity Long Room Hub.

Introduction and welcome



Johnny Cunningham, descendant of Daniel O'Connell

Reflections on the Liberator



Professor Maurice Bric (UCD)

Emeritus Professor of History and Director of the O'Connell Summer School (29-30 July 2025).



Dr. Mary McAuliffe (UCD)

Historian and Director of Gender Studies.



Dr. Maurice Fitzpatrick

Filmmaker and biographer of John Hume.

Edmund Burke Theatre, Arts Block, 3 p.m.

Session 2: *Liberation through Law: Daniel O'Connell and the Path to Justice.*



Chief Justice of Ireland, Donal O'Donnell

Chair



The Hon Ms. Justice Nessa Cahill

Judge of the High Court of Ireland.



Seán Guerin SC

Chair of the Council of The Bar of Ireland.



John Berry SC

Barrister.

Day 1

Edmund Burke Theatre, Arts Block, 3 p.m.

Session 2: *Liberation through Law: Daniel O'Connell and the Path to Justice.*

Questions and Answers



Dr. Niamh Howlin

Sutherland School of Law,
UCD and Vice President of
the Irish Legal History
Society.



Paul Gallagher SC

Barrister and
Attorney General
(2007-2011, 2020-
2022).

Questions and Answers

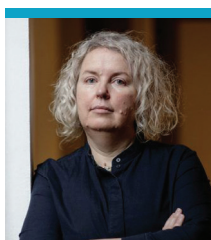
Break for light refreshments

Edmund Burke Theatre, Arts Block, 6 p.m.

Session 3: *The Life and Global Legacies of Daniel O'Connell.*



**The
Registrar,
Professor
Neville Cox**
Chair



**Linda Doyle,
Provost**
Welcome

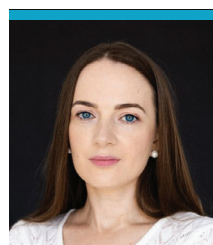


**Imogen
McGrath SC,
The Bar of
Ireland**
Introduction

250th Anniversary Keynote Speeches in Honour of the Liberator:



**Taoiseach Micheál
Martin, T.D.**



Oleksandra Matviichuk

Ukrainian human rights
lawyer and Nobel Peace Prize
laureate for her work with the
Centre for Civil Liberties.



Professor Fionnuala Ní Aoláin

(University of Minnesota and
Queen's University Belfast),
an expert on international
human rights and former UN
Special Rapporteur.



Professor Christine Kinealy

(Quinnipiac University), a
renowned historian of
O'Connell, the anti-slavery
movement, and the Great
Famine.

Day 2

Wednesday 30 July 2025

Edmund Burke Theatre, Arts Block, 10 a.m.

Session 4: *Justice and Human Dignity: 21st Century Struggles for Human Rights.*



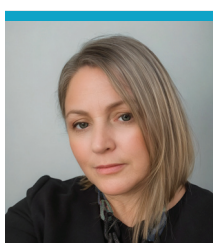
**The Attorney General
Rossa Fanning SC**

Chair



Nils Muižnieks

Former Commissioner for Human Rights at the Council of Europe and current UN Special Rapporteur on Human Rights in Belarus.



Caoilfhionn Gallagher KC

Human rights lawyer and Ireland's Special Rapporteur on Child Protection.



Professor Mary Lawlor

(Trinity College Dublin), UN Special Rapporteur on Human Rights Defenders and founder of Front Line Defenders.

Break.

Edmund Burke Theatre, Arts Block. 1.00 p.m.

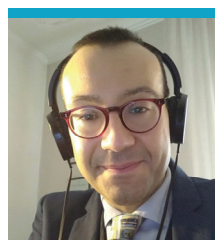
Session 5: *European and Global Identities: O'Connell's International Impact.*



Jimmy Deenihan

Former Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.

Chair



Professor Davide Mazzi

(University of Modena and Reggio Emilia), an expert on O'Connell's European identity as well as his oratory.



Dr. Jennifer Keating

(University of Pittsburgh), an expert on Frederick Douglass, and the author of *AI and Humanity*.

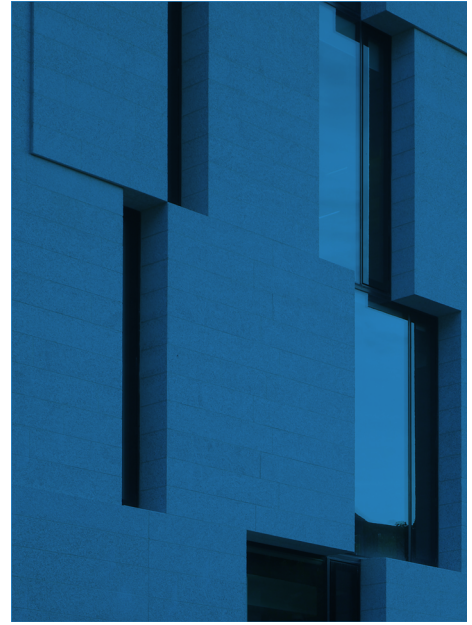
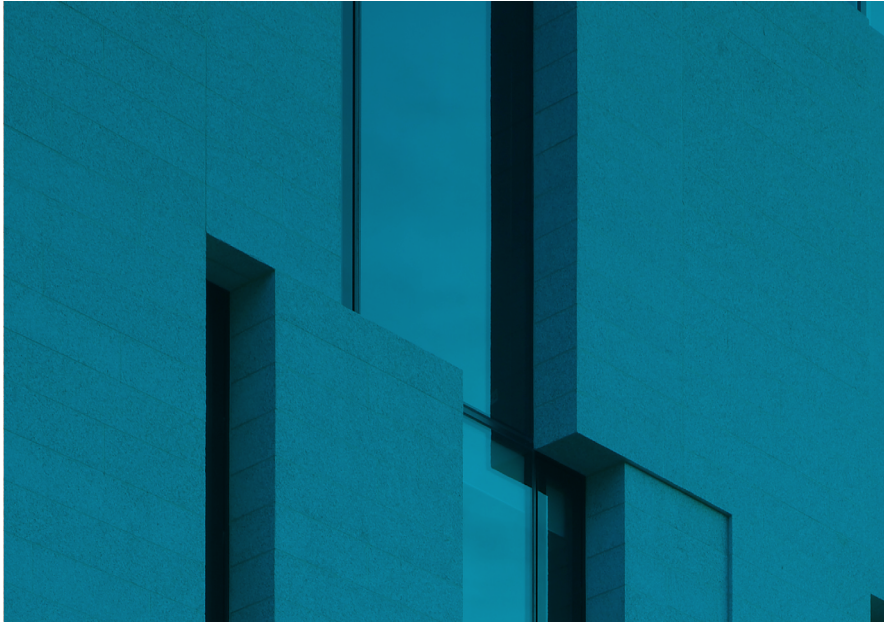


Professor Patrick Geoghegan

(Trinity College Dublin), Director of the Trinity Long Room Hub, author of *King Dan and Liberator*, and presenter of the award-winning Talking History on Newstalk.

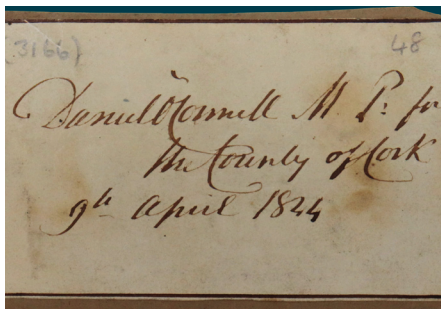
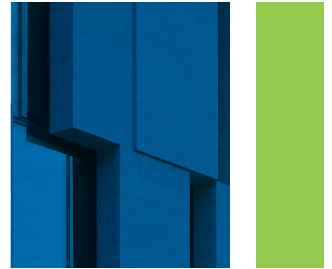
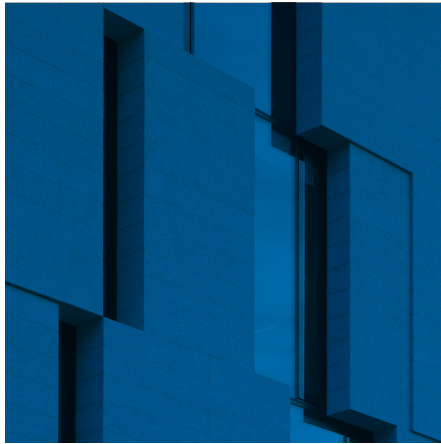
Glasnevin Cemetery, 4.30 p.m.

History Ireland Hedge School: Glasnevin Cemetery Panel debate on the life and legacy of the Liberator at Glasnevin Cemetery. This will be recorded before a small live audience and will later be made available to the public.

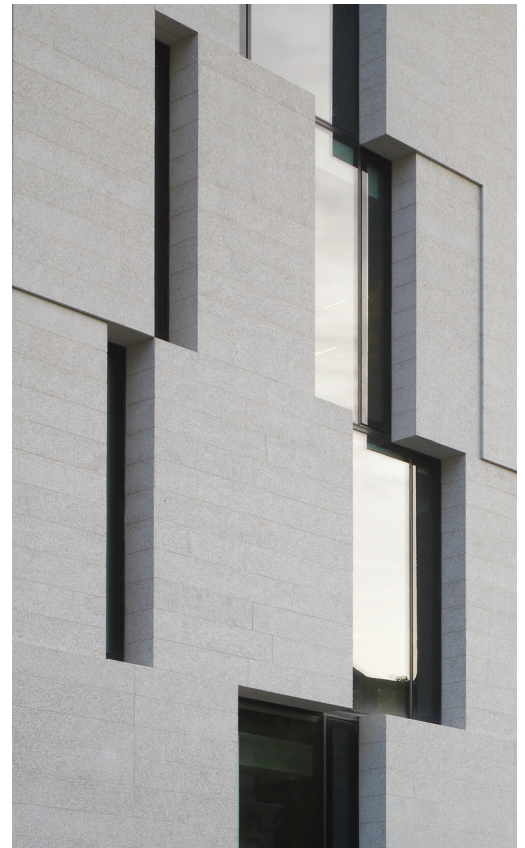



THE TRINITY LONG ROOM HUB





The Trinity Long Room Hub is Trinity's flagship Arts and Humanities Research Institute. Our mission is to be a beacon for the Arts and Humanities, to support and make possible groundbreaking research, to engage with the public in meaningful ways demonstrating the value and significance of what we do, and to contribute to the making of public policy in areas connected to our expertise.





There are many opportunities to demonstrate this in the months ahead. In July 2026, Ireland will assume the Presidency of the Council of the European Union, for the first time since Brexit. This is the perfect opportunity to demonstrate the power of the Arts and Humanities in connecting nations, shaping identities, and helping societies to imagine a more democratic, shared future.

We are developing an ambitious programme of events to run between now and the end of the presidency in December 2026. We want to explore Ireland's European identity through the different lenses of history, culture, language, peace studies, literature, philosophy, education, religion, law, linguistics and more. Our aim is to celebrate Ireland's longstanding engagement with Europe going back centuries, showcase our research strengths embedded across all our research disciplines as well as through the Library and demonstrate that the Arts and Humanities are fundamental to understanding and attempting to resolve our greatest challenges at home and abroad.

Daniel O'Connell understood perfectly Ireland's European identity. Across the European continent, he is remembered as 'the man who discovered Ireland', someone who was a huge influence on European liberalism and the development of peaceful democratic movements. Charles de Gaulle's grandmother wrote a biography of O'Connell, and it was one of his favourite books growing up. When he resigned as president of the 5th Republic, de Gaulle travelled to Ireland and visited Derrynane, where he wrote in the visitors' book: 'Honneur a O'Connell, libérateur, C de Gaulle.'

Like O'Connell, we see how the power of words and ideas can inspire change and help imagine a new and better future.



Our Partners



The O’Connell 250 Symposium is a partnership between the Trinity Long Room Hub, The Bar of Ireland, and Diageo, in association with Dublin Cemeteries Trust (which includes Glasnevin Cemetery), the School of Histories and Humanities, and the Daniel O’Connell Summer School (29-30 July). And we are also very grateful to have been supported by the Department of Culture, Communications and Sport and the Government of Ireland. Our thanks to Minister Patrick O’Donovan and the Commemorations Advisory Committee chaired by Bryan Dobson.

Our choice of partners is based on deep historical connections to O’Connell. Perhaps the greatest barrister in Irish history, O’Connell was called to the Bar in 1798. For three decades he ran a hugely successful practice alongside his political work, campaigning for Catholic emancipation and his long-term objective of restoring the Irish parliament. Irish barristers and judges have long remembered and celebrated the legal career of O’Connell, none more so than the late Supreme Court Judge, Adrian Hardiman.



Our thanks to Seán Guerin SC, the Chair of the Council of the Bar of Ireland, Imogen McGrath SC, the chair of the Public Affairs Committee, and Cormac O’Culáin and the Bar of Ireland’s communications team for partnering with us to mark the 250th anniversary and we look forward to working with them on creating digital educational packs on O’Connell for every school on the island.

Glasnevin Cemetery owes its origins to Daniel O’Connell. He helped establish the Dublin Cemeteries Committee in 1828 to provide dignified burial space ‘for those of all religions and none’. Glasnevin was opened in 1832 and in 1847 it became the final resting place of ‘The Liberator’. The ‘soaring tower’ which stands over his crypt was described by former British Prime Minister, W.E. Gladstone, as ‘the pre-eminent national symbol of his country’. We are grateful to the CEO of Dublin Cemeteries Trust, Brian Gallogly, as well as Dr. Brian Casey, and Liz Fitzpatrick.

Diageo represents a number of iconic brands, and three in particular have strong connections with O’Connell. Edmond Smithwick (part of the Smithwick’s brewing family) was a great friend of O’Connell. Indeed, O’Connell was the godfather of his son, Daniel O’Connell Smithwick. George Roe, the founder of George Roe & Co., was another close friend, a supporter of emancipation, and succeeded O’Connell as Lord Mayor of Dublin in 1842. The connections with the Guinness family are remarkable. In 1815 Daniel O’Connell killed a man in a duel, and offered an annual annuity to his widow, Jane D’Esterre. She later married John Grattan Guinness, a son of Arthur Guinness. O’Connell was always grateful to the Guinness family for supporting emancipation and liberal causes. Notwithstanding this, in the 1830s O’Connell and his family established their own brewery, but the porter was said to be ‘undrinkable’.



Acknowledgments

A note from the Director of the Trinity Long Room Hub, Professor Patrick Geoghegan.

The Daniel O’Connell Summer School, led by its Director, Professor Maurice Bric, has been at the forefront of commemorating O’Connell and exploring his legacy and contemporary relevance every summer. It takes place over two days, at Cahersiveen and Derrynane House, and each year explores issues of importance to O’Connell which are still relevant today and celebrates the rich traditions and folklore of O’Connell’s native South Kerry.

I would like to thank all those who contributed to the organisation of this symposium.

My thanks to the Provost, Linda Doyle, for all her support and encouragement, and the Registrar, Professor Neville Cox for his inspirational guidance.

The idea of developing a five-year programme of commemorative events, starting with the 250th anniversary of O’Connell’s birth and ending with O’Connell taking his seat in parliament, was made possible thanks to an award of BOOST funding from the Dean of Research, Professor Sinéad Ryan, and the Research Office at Trinity.

The Library at Trinity College Dublin is one of our greatest national resources. I am very grateful to the Library for permission to include some of its images, including the photos of O’Connell’s top hat and signature card. My thanks to Laura Shanahan, Jenny Doyle, and, of course, the Librarian, Helen Shenton.

In the Trinity Long Room Hub, the whole team provided transformative help and support, especially Dr. Caitriona Curtis, Aoife King, Rike Held, and Christina Hamilton.



Engraving of Daniel O'Connell as a young barrister, *Dublin Magazine*, March 1813 (O'Connell defended Rowan Cashel 1816).

Image courtesy of Cork Multitext Project.

In the School of Histories and Humanities a huge amount of work was done by Joanne Lynch arranging crucial details, and we are also grateful to Stephen Galvin: for his crucial work, as well as the Head of School, Professor Micheál Ó Siochrú, and the Head of History, Dr. Joseph Clarke. And Alberto Santos Cancelas who helped finalise arrangements.

I am also grateful to the Taoiseach, Micheál Martin, and the Tánaiste, Simon Harris, for recognising the significance of O'Connell and his contribution to Irish and world history and for including the anniversary of his birth in the Programme for Government.

My thanks also to Peter MacDonagh for providing crucial advice at different stages.

The British Ambassador to Ireland, Paul Johnston, has been a wonderfully enthusiastic supporter of historical and cultural events that connect our two countries. O'Connell's career and story is one such example, and I look forward to seeing how our countries commemorate the great bicentenary events in 2029 and 2030.

My thanks to Tommy Graham and the team at *History Ireland* for their excellent contribution to the success of the Symposium.

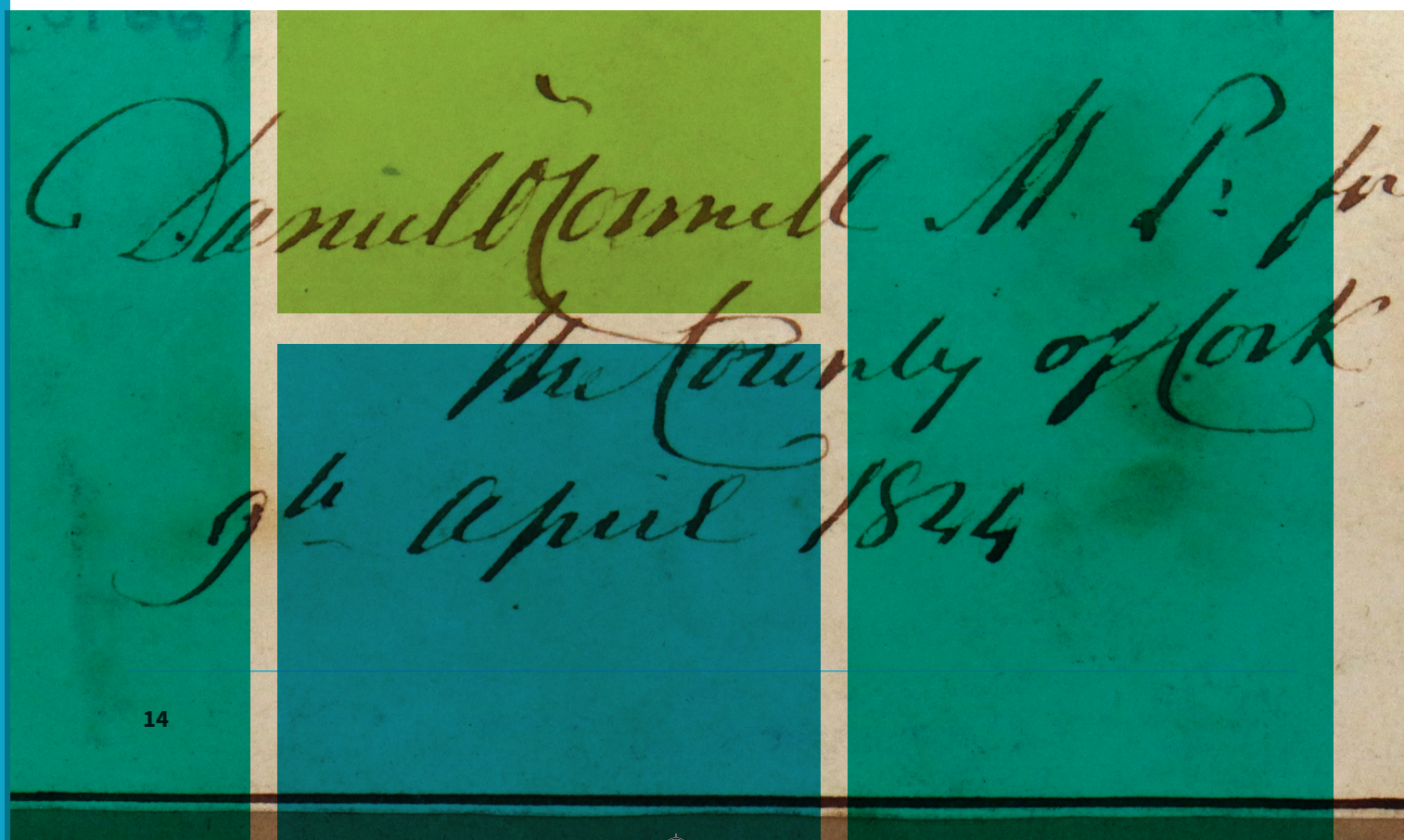
Dr. Caitlin White, a brilliant scholar specialising in Public History joined the project to help us prepare digital educational packs for schools across the island, and we are excited about developing resources highlighting how Irish identity was, and still is a European identity, while showcasing O'Connell's contribution to intellectual and political thought on a global scale.

My thanks to Isobel Houlihan of the School of Law for acting as our Visiting Dignitary Liaison Officer during the Symposium.

The Communications and Public Affairs Team at Trinity did superb work, my thanks to Áine Griffin, Sally-Anne Fisher, Fiona Tyrrell, Catherine O'Mahony, and Sorcha O'Boyle.

Thanks to Fiach Kelly, Muirne Lyons, and Maura Duffy for all their help.

Finally, I am especially indebted to Seán Mitchell and his team at Mitchell Kane for the wonderful design of our ad in *History Ireland* and for the design of this conference programme. And to Custodian for arranging the printing of it.



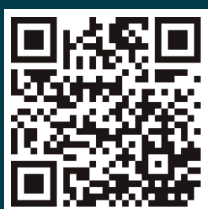




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