



Does Irish History have a future?

Irish Historical Society Symposium Tuesday 17 April 2018

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Please Note: This symposium will begin at **6.00pm**

Venue: Neill Theatre, Trinity Long Room Hub, Trinity College Dublin.

Admission is free but booking is essential.

Eventbrite: <http://bit.ly/2pt0kLd>

All are welcome

Does Irish History have a Future? IRISH HISTORICAL SOCIETY

I.

Four decades ago, Robin Dudley Edwards published 'An Agenda for Irish History, 1978–2018', laying down various prescriptions for younger historians which, he indicated, they would ignore at their peril. These included:

- (1) Reinterpretation of Irish history in European context by 2000 and global context (paying particular attention to China) by 2018. Edwards hoped that by 2000 'it would be taken for granted that historical schools would offer programmes in the history of Russia, of India, of China and of the third world'.
- (2) Recognition of historians as 'prophets', whose 'role in society' would be 'far more decisive than that of their predecessors'.
- (3) An integrated assessment of all 'sources from the beginning of history to the present time', embracing archaeological, anthropological, and literary materials.
- (4) 'Personal inspection' of original manuscripts rather than reliance on copies.
- (5) Preservation of personal independence: 'The historian must do his own thing. ... only in a limited way should the historian involve himself in collective activities lest the result appears to be "the agreed lie".'
- (6) Appeals to governments and administrators to 'establish professional archivists' and to create an adequate 'public service in information retrieval', perhaps through 'a computer link to university archival centres'. This would enable undergraduates to have 'some personal opportunity to appreciate [archival] material'.

II.

This far-sighted agenda raises two broad issues for the rising generation of Irish historians. First, to what extent have Irish historians achieved what Edwards considered essential for the survival of the profession? Second, what prescriptions would it be reasonable and desirable to propose for the future of Irish historical practice over the next four decades, assuming (as Edwards posited) that 'mankind has successfully avoided the danger of destroying all life upon earth'? To explore both issues, the **IRISH HISTORICAL SOCIETY** has convened a special symposium in the Trinity Long Room Hub, to be held at 6 p.m. on Tuesday, **17 APRIL 2018**. Four historians have been invited to offer their views on these issues in presentations of 15 minutes, to be followed by an open discussion.

III.

The symposium will open with a retrospective assessment of the first issue from a 'senior' historian. The other papers will concentrate on the second issue, offering 'younger' historians an opportunity to contemplate the coming times. Each speaker has a distinct perspective on Irish history:

Ciaran Brady is Professor of Early Modern History and Historiography at Trinity College, Dublin.
Juliana Adelman, Lecturer in History at Dublin City University, specialises in the history of science and the environment.

Sophie Cooper, Lecturer in U.S. & British World History at Northumbria University, is a scholar of the global Irish diaspora.

Conor Mulvagh, Lecturer in Irish History at University College, Dublin, is a political historian.