# 40th Annual Conference of the of the Eighteenth-Century Ireland Society

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# Abstracts of Papers

Conference Organising Committee

Prof. Aileen Douglas, Dr Amy Prendergast & Dr Patrick Walsh

## Session 1a 'Improvement'

**Colm Murray (TUD/Grangegorman):** *Comfort and 'welfare' in the House of Industry, Dublin. Evidence from pamphlets and reports*

This paper looks at the provision made to address begging, poverty and destitution in the late eighteenth century the *Corporation for the Relief of the Poor in Dublin* set up by an Act of 1772. Based on architectural history doctoral research to understand the constellation of institutions at Grangegorman in Dublin, which included an asylum, penitentiary and bridewells, multiple hospitals, as well as the original workhouse or House of Industry, the paper explores the origins of what might be called 'welfare' as understood by the Protestant Ascendancy. Whilst the research focus is on buildings, understanding the institutions that constructed them requires prior understanding of their ethos, intentions, operation, and effect. This leads to an examination of two 'keywords': Comfort (in use from 1796), and 'provision for the poor' (from 1768; acquiring the appellation 'Welfare' much later, but, it will be asserted, integral to the intentions of the Corporation from its inception). The workings of the House of Industry elicited a lively discourse of pamphlets and reports, from which this presentation will draw, supplemented by the minutes of the Corporation. A notable threshold was reached when incarceration was all but discontinued around 1799, and the Governors reported that admissions were voluntary, and the coercion of the beadles was no longer necessary. The pamphlets open a reading of the role of the institution as a case study of ideas for the political-economic arrangement of society that were either rejected or not assimilated by Adam Smith, though available to him through his correspondents.

**Jason McElligott (Marsh's Library)** *'The Women of the Royal Hospital Kilmainham'*

The recent discovery of the 'lost' records of the royal military hospital at Kilmainham outside Dublin offers new perspectives on the social and cultural history of eighteenth-century Ireland. The institution has traditionally been seen as an exclusively male community. Yet, the records show there were a surprising number of women living in and working at the site throughout the more than 230 years of its existence. There were nurses, kitchen and domestic staff, but also the wives and children of some of the Pensioners, as well as those of the military and civilian officials of the hospital. Some women unconnected to the hospital rented lands or houses on the site, and a number were contractors who entered into contracts to provide services such as plumbing and glazing in the hospital. Throughout the entire eighteenth century, the Providores responsible for the profitable contracts to provide food and drink for the substantial community of almost 500 people resident on the site were exclusively female. This talk will explore what the records tell us about the lives and status of these women, as well as their interactions with the resident old soldiers and the military authorities who managed the site. It will trace the outlines of a decline in the status of women at the hospital in the years before and after the Act of Union.

**Harrie Neale (University of York)** *'Wastes, which steam poison to the skies': Irish Atmospherics, Bog Improvement, and Catholic Rights to Life*

The 1772 Act 'to Encourage the improvement of unprofitable Bogs' is often briefly noted in histories of eighteenth-century Ireland as the first piece of legislation to repeal the penal laws. The meagre law gave Catholics the right to lease up to fifty acres of bog land and exempted tenants from tithes and cess for a number of years on the condition of draining and improving the bogs. This footnote in Irish history nevertheless represented decades of campaigning and lobbying by mainly Catholic writers who connected property rights to a broader national discourse of bog improvement. Drawing on recent scholarship on 'atmospherics' in eighteenth-century studies, this paper examines the medicalized scientific discourse of air pollution, flooding, and food security in writing about bog improvement in the mid-late eighteenth century. With a focus on Charles O'Conor's political pamphlets and national histories, this paper situates his campaign for Catholic rights within medical, scientific, and literary networks, and explores how this influence shaped his bog poetics, or what we might term 'literary atmospherics'.

## 1b Texts, Transmission and Circulation

**Keirán Morrissey-Fernández (University of Limerick)** *The Availability of Works by Miguel de Cervantes in Eighteenth-Century Ireland*

The influence Cervantes' works have had on English literature since their publication cannot be understated. In the early seventeenth century, his *Novelas ejemplares* were being adapted to the London stage by playwrights such as John Fletcher before they even had prose translations. His other works were quickly introduced to the English literary scene with *Los trabajos de Persiles y Sigismunda* receiving an English translation in 1619 by Matthew Lownes, only two years after the publication of the original. This is to say nothing of *Don Quixote,* which had no less than seven different English translations just by the end of the eighteenth century. *Don Quixote* also served as an inspiration for many of the satirical books published in the eighteenth century. For example, Charlotte Lennox wrote a female version of the text, *The Female Quixote: or, The Adventures of Arabella* which was published in 1752. Pinpointing the extent to which these works made it to Ireland is a trickier task. Certainly, editions of Cervantes' books were printed in Dublin throughout the eighteenth century, though how widely they were distributed is a somewhat murkier question. This paper aims to explore how familiar the Irish or the Anglo-Irish author would have been with Cervantes during the eighteenth century. It would be safe to assume that *Don Quixote* was widely read: according to *The Dublin University Magazine,* by the beginning of the nineteenth century, "'The Life and Adventures of Don Quixote' was found among our Irish hedge school manuals" but the availability of his other works were more exclusive.

**Moyra Haslett (Queen's University Belfast)** Printed song in eighteenth-century Ireland: *The Ladies Amusement* (c.1748) and *The Honest Fellow* (c.1793-97)

Early printed songs tended to separate into traditions of tune-books (with engraved music) and single-sheet songs and song-books which printed only lyrics. Ballad opera libretti might include song tunes engraved as an appendix, although this practice was more common in London than in Dublin. The separation of tunes and lyrics was also commonplace in manuscript traditions. (In James Cody's

many transcriptions for Edward Bunting, for example, only two songs were recorded with tune and lyrics together.) This separation reflects how song tunes and lyrics could be adapted and rearranged at will; and how only a relatively small number of people would have been willing to pay for, or even to understand, expensively engraved notated music.

Two striking exceptions to the separation of lyrics and tunes, however, are the following collections, both of which presented tunes with song-lyrics underlaid: John Frederick Lampe, *Ladies Amusement: being a new collection of songs, ballads, &c. with symphonies and thorough-bass* (Dublin: James Hoey, c. 1748) and *The Honest Fellow, or Buck's necessary companion* (Dublin, c. 1793-7). These two publications offer very different glimpses of song culture: the first, Lampe's collection, is a 'polite' song collection for female performers, the second is a collection of 'jocular' songs for drinking gatherings. In addition to describing and contextualising these two collections, the paper will also explore the window onto different kinds of sociability which they offer.

**Nina Cnockaert-Guillou (Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies)** Tadhg Ó Neachtain and Seón Mac Solaidh's *Agallamh na Seanórach*

The thirteenth-century *Acallam na Senórach* 'The Colloquy of the Ancients' and *Agallamh Bheag* (composed slightly later) were the basis for a late medieval or early modern rewriting, commonly referred to as the Reeves *Agallamh na Seanórach* (*AgS*). Though Dublin, Royal Irish Academy, MS 24 P 5 (s. xvii) preserves the oldest and fullest surviving version of *AgS*, several eighteenth- and nineteenth-century manuscripts also contain parts of *AgS*. Ní Shéaghdha used some of these for her 1945 edition of *AgS*, but the connections between these manuscripts have not been investigated further.

This paper will focus on the manuscripts written by Seón Mac Solaidh (*fl.* 1711–24) and Tadhg Ó Neachtain (1671–*c.*1752), namely Dublin, National Library, MSS G 126, G 124 and G 125, and Dublin, Royal Irish Academy, MS 23 L 34. Mac Solaidh's G 126 and G 124 contain parts of two different versions of the prosimetric *Agallamh*, while G 125 is a collection of poems clearly excerpted from *AgS*. Ó Neachtain's 23 L 34 is also a collection of poems excerpted from *AgS*, though it does not contain exactly the same poems as G 125 and presents them in a different order. This paper will compare Ó Neachtain and Mac Solaidh's poetic collections with *AgS*, and demonstrate that these collections help fill *lacunae* in *AgS* as we have it. It will also discuss the scholars' sources, shedding new light on the interest in, and transmission of *Agallamh na Seanórach* in the eighteenth century.

## Session 2a European Connections

**Maria Zukovs (St Andrews)** *Revolutionary Refugees: Dublin as a city of refuge for French émigrés, 1789-1794*

In August 1790, prominent Dublin bookseller, Antoine Gerna, placed an advertisement in *The Hibernian Journal* for a French-language reading room. The advertisement, which was in French, stated there would be a variety of foreign newspapers available. This reading room was opened just over a year after the outbreak of the French Revolution. As the Revolution progressed, increasing numbers of people fled France to places like Dublin. Dublin welcomed many émigrés, with these individuals frequently represented in newspaper reports and advertisements.

Gerna's reading room was only one example of Dublin welcoming French exiles. Dublin had historically been a city of refuge for French people fleeing persecution. In the seventeenth century, Huguenots were invited to settle in Dublin to help bolster the Protestant population. They contributed to the city's economic growth and helped establish important connections to the continent. By the end of the eighteenth century, Dublin's French community was still visible. Numerous businesses bore Huguenot names and were frequently represented in newspaper advertisements. The continued existence of several French churches suggest they were still a distinct community. With the outbreak of the French Revolution, Dublin's French connections made the city an appealing place for émigrés seeking safety. Not only was there a wealth of French goods readily available in Dublin, but French news was abundant and easily accessible.

This paper will explore how Dublin became an obvious choice where French Revolutionary émigrés could flee to safety. It will show that, due to its historic connections to France, Dublin was a welcoming place for French people where they might encounter the comforts of home.

**Liam Chambers (Mary Immaculate College, Limerick)** *Reading Rousseau? Assessing the library of the Irish College, Bordeaux, 1794*

On 24 September 1794, the French revolutionary authorities returned the confiscated library of the Irish College in Bordeaux. The record of this event notes that the books 'were handed over … to the students of … the Irish seminary'. By this point, however, the students who had endured a period of imprisonment in their own college had long departed the city. The fate of the library is, therefore, uncertain. Fortunately for the historian, the revolutionary authorities documented the collection before they returned it and the resulting 'catalogue' is the focus of the present paper. Building on the work of Antoine Louis Bertrand, T. J. Walsh and, most recently, Diarmaid Ó Catháin, the paper begins by examining the Irish College in Bordeaux in the later eighteenth century, and assessing the impact of the French Revolution on the student community and college property. The paper then turns to the 'Catalogue of the Library of the Irish Seminary' to provide an initial survey of the collection of books. Assessing a relatively small library catalogue is, of course, problematic for a number of reasons, not least in this case because it is likely that books had been removed from the collection in the early 1790s. However, the paper suggests that the 'catalogue' offers some insights into the intellectual world of an *ancien régime* Irish College. For example, a number of landmark Enlightenment writers are present, including Bayle, Montesquieu, Voltaire and Rousseau. The paper concludes by placing the library in context and by offering some thoughts on Irish Colleges, Catholics and the Enlightenment**.**

**Clíona Ó Gallchoir (UCC)** "'*Un Dictionnaire néologique'*: French Contexts for Maria Edgeworth's Views on Language and Linguistic Change"

In *An Essay on Irish Bulls*, Maria and R. L. Edgeworth draw a direct connection between the transformation of language in France in the context of the French Revolution and the emergence of a revolutionary vocabulary in Ireland in the 1790s. Words such as "committee men" to describe members of the United Irish movement are related to the fact that "it has been […] found necessary to publish, in France, *un Dictionnaire néologique*, a dictionary of the new terms adopted since the revolution." The most plausible source for this reference is Pierre-Nicolas Chantreau's *Dictionnaire Nationale et Anecdotique* (1790), a text not entirely dissimilar to the Edgeworths' *Essay* in that its apparent status as a scholarly contribution is complicated by its use of satire.

This reference to Chantreau is just one of numerous examples revealing the significance of French influence on Maria Edgeworth's ideas on language and on the ways in which language registers and responds to social and political change, creating in turn new modes of expression and thought. This paper will explore the French dimensions of Edgeworth's theories of language and language change, drawing on *An Essay on Irish Bulls* and on a selection of her fiction to discuss how these ideas can be seen to influence the linguistic texture of her work.

## 2b Caiticeasmaí, filíocht agus an dialann: Éagsúlacht seánraí i dtraidisiún na Gaeilge san 18ú Aois

**Ciarán MacMurchaidh (DCU)** 'Ó Raghallaigh agus de Buitléar: Foilsiú agus gluaiseacht caiticeasmaí Gaeilge agus Gaeilge-Béarla in Éirinn san ochtú haois déag'

Idir *c.*1727 agus 1796, is féidir cuntas a thabhairt ar 6 cinn de chaiticeasmaí a foilsíodh i nGaeilge nó go dátheangach in Éirinn. Cé go mbaineann dúshlán áirithe le stair chló na leabhar sin a rianú agus cóipeanna díobh atá ar marthain a dheimhniú i ngach cás, déanann an *Clóliosta* clúiteach (2020) a thiomsaigh Richard Sharpe agus Mícheál Hoyne an dúshlán sin i bhfad níos fusa a ionramháil.

Sa pháipéar seo bainfear úsáid as *Clóliosta* agus as foinsí eile chun na 6 chaiticeasma a liostú in ord croineolaíoch agus roinnt eolas cúlra a sholáthar faoi stair chló gach téacs ionas gur féidir roinnt tuairimí a thabhairt maidir lena dtionchar ar a chéile chomh maith lena gcúrsaíocht taobh istigh den phobal Caitliceach Gaeilge. Déanfar iarracht, fosta, tionchar na dtéacsanna a mheas i gcomhthéacs staid na teanga ag an am agus a léiriú go raibh ról lárnach ag caiticeasmaí, níos mó ná cineálacha eile téacs, ní hamháin i dtaca le cur chun cinn an chreidimh Chaitlicigh ach iad feidhmiú mar sciath chosanta don teanga féin – ar feadh tamaill, ar aon nós.

**Máire Ní Íceadha (UCC)** *Léas eile ar shaothar an fhile Eoghan Rua Ó Súilleabháin (1748-1784)*

Scrúdófar san alt seo cuntais ar an bhfile Eoghan Rua Ó Súílleabháin agus fiosrófar an anailís a thugtar ar a chuid filíochta go minic i bhfianaise na ndéantúisí a chum sé. Tarraingeofar ar dhéantúisí áirithe dá chuid atá foilsithe mar aon le saothar atá curtha i leith Eoghain Rua agus a bhfuil cóipeanna díobh ar marthain i lámhscríbhinní Gaeilge.

**Peadar Ó Muircheartaigh, (University of Edinburgh)** [M]undane diary entries in Irish'? Cathal Ó Conchúir agus Annála Beaga Bhéal Átha na gCarr

Bíodh is go n-áirítear Cathal Ó Conchúir Bhéal Átha na gCarr - nó Charles O'Conor of Belanagare mar is fearr aithne air i mBéarla - ar dhuine de phearsana móra an ochtú céad déag in Éirinn, is fíorbheagán aird a díríodh go dtí seo ar an gcín lae a choinnigh sé i gcaitheamh a shaoil ar fad. Is é atá fúm a dhéanamh sa pháipéar seo breathnú ar dhialannaíocht Ghaeilge Uí Chonchúir agus ar na lámhscríbhinní ina gcaomhnaítear na hiontrálacha dialainne seo. Díreofar go speisialta ar lámhscríbhinn amháin atá anois ar coimeád in Acadamh Ríoga na hÉireann, lámhscríbhinn a bhaineann leis na 1770idí, d'fhonn léargas a thabhairt ar na múnlaí dialannaíochta a chleacht Ó Conchúir.

## 3a Echoes and Re-imaginings: Eighteenth-Century Literature Now

**David Clare (Mary Immaculate College, University of Limerick)** *Swiftian Echoes in the Work of Stewart Parker*

Arguably, one of the most underrated Irish playwrights of the twentieth century was Belfast-native Stewart Parker, who died tragically young of cancer in 1988, a few weeks after his 47th birthday. As his biographer Marilynn Richtarik has pointed out, Parker's artistic voice and perspective were significantly influenced by his three "favourite writers": "Swift, Beckett, [and] Joyce". In this paper, I trace the underexplored Swiftian echoes that resonate throughout Parker's ouevre. I discuss the two plays that Parker wrote about Swift's life (*The Yahoo's Overthrow* from 1967 and a play for adolescents entitled simply *Jonathan Swift* from 1971), as well as two works in which he alludes to Swift and his work directly: the 1963 poem "Broken Lives", which features two lines about Swift, and his 1987 play *Pentecost*, with its repeated references to "Lilliput". I also demonstrate that Parker is slyly alluding to Swift's life and work in three other plays: *The Actress and the Bishop* (1976), *Nightshade* (1980) and *Pratt's Fall* (1983). *The Actress and the* Bishop touches on Swift's relationship with Vanessa and his friendship with William Congreve; *Nightshade* includes a character who is an Anglican Dean, as well as pointed and repeated use of the word "Presto" (Swift's nickname); and *Pratt's Fall* arguably references Swift's "savage indignation" over colonialism, his love of satire, and (as arguably indicated by *Gulliver's Travels*) his interest in Irish medieval *immram* tales.

**Conrad Brunström (Maynooth University)** '*Darkness and Confusion': whose eighteenth-century is it anyway? Perspectives on teaching eighteenth-century material in an Irish university setting.*

This paper will argue that the Irish eighteenth-century is stronger than it knows, in terms of its relevance to debates prevalent within the twenty-first century classroom.

The knowledge base of undergraduates meeting eighteenth-century Irish culture for the first time has changed signficantly. Chronological information may appear to be sketchy and inconsistent and it is increasingly unwise to assume that students are necessarily aware of the sequencing of critical historical events, yet an awareness of the dynamics of cultural controversy is often remarkably acute and perceptive among the student community.

The particular example of the "Irish Slaves Meme" and the ongoing effort of its refutation will be explored as a way of demonstrating the ongoing relevance of efforts to preserve the complexity of the eighteenth-century Irish experience within a contemporary context of social media driven populism that exploits competitive claims of "victimhood".

When the eighteenth century is taught in a contemporary Irish context then a new urgency is given to questions of "fact checking". A study of the paradoxes of Irish identity in a context that demonstrates a trajectory from Jacobitism to Jacobinism becomes a proving ground for discussions of civics. Students are already responding warmly to such approaching, conscious that they are inheriting a world saturated with authoritarian discourse that generates increasingly monocular distortions of history in order to validate itself.

**Lydia Freire Gargamala (University of Vigo)** *Between Sanctuary and Subjugation: Reimagining Irishness in the Novels of Elizabeth Griffith and Regina Maria Roche*

This paper delves into the multifaceted portrayal of Irishness—encompassing language, people, and identity—in the works of two prominent Irish-born authors of the eighteenth century, Elizabeth Griffith and Regina Maria Roche. In The History of Lady Barton (1771), Griffith situates Ireland as a marginal yet powerful space within a broader colonial framework. Here, Irishness transcends geographical boundaries, taking on a cultural and symbolic liminality. The novel presents Ireland as a paradoxical realm: intimately tied to the dominant imperial identity yet, at the same time, marked by an essence of otherness, rendering it both a refuge from and a counterpoint to the homogenizing pressures of English societal norms. Through the character of Louisa Barton, Griffith envisions Ireland as a sanctuary of hospitality and gentleness, sharply contrasted with England's patriarchal rigidity and moral decay. Similarly, Regina Maria Roche interrogates Irish identity and its fraught relationship with colonial discourse in The Children of the Abbey (1796) and The Maid of the Hamlet (1793). Often heralded as the first Irish national tale, The Children of the Abbey portrays Amanda Fitzalan's migrations across Britain and Ireland as symbolic of dispossession and cultural vindication, criticising English moral depravity while simultaneously foregrounding Irish values. In The Maid of the Hamlet, Roche crafts a narrative of transformation and renewal through the character of Matilda, whose trajectory mirrors Louisa Barton's in its representation of Ireland as a site of potential rebirth. However, Matilda's experience is mediated through a persistent sense of English superiority, reflecting a colonial mindset wherein the English are positioned as inherently suited to guide the Irish towards improvement.

Taken together, these three novels present Ireland as a complex, paradoxical space that navigates the tensions between colonial influence and cultural resilience. By portraying Irishness not as a monolithic or subordinate identity, but as one that embodies resistance, transformation, and renewal, these novels challenge dominant imperial narratives and offer a nuanced vision of Irish identity as both a site of marginalization and empowerment.

## 3b Social and Economic History

**Brendan Twomey (Trinity College Dublin)** *From Office-holding to Civil Service – the eighteenth-century Ireland experience*

From Office-Holding to Civil Service' is an analytical trope that ascribes considerable historical significance to the purported transition from the appointment to the leadership positions within important civil and military institutions via patronage, patrimony and purchase, to one where this leadership was drawn from a cadre of permanent civil servants working within institutionalised bureaucratic structures. The argument is that the transition was necessitated by the secular long-durée increase in the scope and scale, and the enhanced bureaucratic and administrative competence and capabilities, that were a necessary condition for the emergence of a successful fiscal military state in the early modern period. Not surprisingly this enhanced institutional scale and intervention gave rise to a commensurate rise in political demands for accountability. Accordingly, parliamentary investigations of what were perceived as institutional failures became an increasingly common feature of this period; a process that has been labelled as 'auditing Leviathan'. However, such institutional growth, reform and review did not happen in a vacuum. Perforce these institutions were led by, managed by, and staffed by individuals who varied greatly in their social rank, administrative competence, social and economic networks, and ultimately political reliability.

Can the Office-Holding to Civil Service model be applied to the actual institutional experience of eighteenth-century Ireland? Certainly, Ireland experienced a growth in the number of and in the scope and scale of state institutions. These included the expanded revenue service, the establishment of a plethora of specialised institutions ranging from the Barrack Board, the Linen Board, the Registry of Deeds, and various trustee bodies established to manage specific situations. This paper explores some of these themes by reviewing the career of several, for the most part non-aristocratic and non-sinecure, senior 'working' office holders within several important state institutions in eighteenth-century Ireland. The careers of these men (they were all men) will be reviewed in terms of their appointment, qualifications, remuneration, networks, responsibilities and oversight. Many of these officeholders were directly or indirectly involved in a scandal, or inquiry, or in a challenge to their behaviour or that of their institution, which was publicly questioned even by the rather different, and certainly more opaque, standards of the eighteenth century.

**Paul Kelly (London School of Economics)** *Market Failure in a Booming Economy*

By the end of the eighteenth century, Dublin had grown to be the second largest city in the British Empire and the sixth largest in Europe. This change was partly due to an economic boom for landlords based on rapidly increasing rents on agricultural land. The societal pressures that such rent increases engendered were well known to contemporary commentators and are central to Maria Edgeworth's pioneering novel of 1800, Castle Rackrent. This paper presents new archival data gathered from the Irish Registry of Deeds on rents and interest rates charged for mortgages and compares them to English data.

Among the conclusions reached are that the Irish credit markets failed to develop in an efficient way, which led to Irish entrepreneurs paying significantly higher interest rates on borrowed money compared to their English counterparts. The pattern of interest rates also shows the impact of the South Sea Bubble on Irish investors and that Jonathan Swift was not a very sophisticated investor, generally charging below-market interest rates on his peer to peer loans. The data on rents show that from a very low level at the beginning of the century, rents had increased by a factor of 8 or 9 times by the beginning of the nineteenth. In some cases rents per acre exceeded those on similar English land, though the increase varied by location, with Ulster increases lagging behind those elsewhere. The high rents proved to be unsustainable and ultimately contributed to the problems that faced Irish society in the next century

**Sean Moore (Trinity College Dublin)** 'Village Statesmen' as Local Freemasons in Oliver Goldsmith's *The Deserted Village*: 18th-Century 'Fake News' as Produced by the Secret Service

This paper will discuss Oliver Goldsmith's offhand-remark – often taken as throwaway lines – in The Deserted Village (1770) 'where village statesmen talked with looks profound,/And news much older than their ale went round' as the poet's commentary on what he thinks of the British and Irish print media of his period. It will cite today's U.S. State Department rather 18th-Century practice of making all citizens (male or female) think that they are private security contractors working for the C.I.A. who must read and de-encrypt newspapers and other periodicals to determine their orders. It will do so to explain that Goldsmith was commenting on how the Secret Service was pioneering propaganda and psy-ops techniques to create what his friend Edmund Burke would later call 'little platoons' organized into distinct identity units to create a disastrous form of identity politics to divide the population of the Home Front. Goldsmith is obviously ridiculing men who by virtue of being members of the local and always low-church Masonic lodge – an 'associational culture' fraternal organization usually attached to the local Church of England or Church of Ireland parish – think that they are 'village statesmen' charged with enforcing censorship over their neighbors. He ridicules them in satirical lines

such as 'Low lies that house where nut-brown draughts' inspired' – lines that referred to pubs as where low-church Masonic 'brothers' were drunkenly deceived into becoming bounty-hunters (hitmen, really) for the local mafia who think that they are taking newspaper orders from what they think is the Home Office! This paper will do an overview of Goldsmith's understanding not only of Freemasonry's relationship to the Home Office recruiting of the 18th-Century – mostly private security contractors according to Dublin Castle Secret Service ledgers of the period – but also of previous writers' like George Farquhar, whose play The Recruiting Officer (1706) mocked this practice, and Thomas Gray, whose understanding of how such deluded men often ended-up as 'mute inglorious Miltons' in cemeteries like their 'rude forefathers of the hamlet' is recorded in Elegy Writ in a Country Churchyard (1751).

## 4a Contested Identities

**Claire O'Nuallain (Courthald Institute)** '*Rescuing from oblivion the antiquities of Ireland': Reading agendas in antiquarian watercolours, 1770-1792*

This paper examines the Beranger and Grose collections of watercolours in the National Library of Ireland and the Royal Irish Academy, assessing the role of antiquarian drawings in the self-fashioning of the Protestant landed classes in the final decades of the eighteenth century. The impact of antiquarianism in forming Irish identity through language, literature and architecture has been the subject of sustained academic interest by Clare O'Halloran, Joep Leerssen and Kyle Leyden respectively, but a critical lacuna remains in analysing the visual culture of antiquarianism.

The Hibernian Antiquarian Society, formed in 1779, sought to promote Ireland's ancient past through the publication of a volume of drawings modelled after Francis Grose's Antiquities of England and Wales (1772) and Paul Sandby's Virtuosi's Museum (1778), commissioning sketching tours by Gabriel Beranger (1729-1817), Angelo Maria Bigari (fl. 1772-1779) and John James Barralet (c.1747-1815.) The collapse of the Society in 1782 saw this ambition frustrated, but in 1791, antiquarian Francis Grose instigated an Irish counterpart to his existing collections. Grose died shortly after his arrival in Ireland, and the volume's completion was overseen by Edward Ledwich, erstwhile member of the Hibernian Antiquarian Society. This publication included engraved drawings by Bigari, Thomas Cocking, (fl. 1783-1791) Jonathan Fisher (c. 1740-1809) and others.

This paper situates the Beranger and Grose sets of drawings within evolving discourses of taste in eighteenth century landscape drawing. Through comparative visual analysis and archival research, it aims to read varying agendas in the views created as part of the antiquarian endeavour.

**Henry Swords (Trinity College Dublin)** *'Supporting the national character to future ages': heroes, great men, and the development of Irish identities in war and revolution, 1756-1783.*

The third quarter of the eighteenth-century has rightly been portrayed as an era when Irish identities and political outlooks were in flux. Historians might fruitfully analyse these developments in terms of impersonal systems such as 'politicisation'. Their historical subjects, however, saw issues that mobilised leaders and followers, and had a narrative shaped by heroes fighting villains.
This was obvious during the Seven Years' War. Irishmen and women had their wartime heroes whose feats they celebrated on the streets. British naval heroes like Admirals Boscawen and Hawke stand out, but their command of Irish enthusiasm did not necessarily demonstrate an alignment with 'Britishness'. This paper will show that there was a distinctly 'Irish' lens adopted in the public sphere during the war. Irish contributions, ranging from William Blakeney's defence of Minorca to the Carrickfergus garrison's resistance of Thurot, were always to the forefront.

This sense of pride in *Irish* military exploits serves as the bridge to the adulation of the 'great men' in Irish patriot circles, be they the Dukes of Leinster, Charles Lucas, or Henry Grattan. It is telling that patriot figures make their mark in contemporary Gaelic verse. As stark as the growth of shared Irish patriot great men might seem, their reception betokened evolution rather than revolution. This paper will show that what was construed as heroic in Irish eyes was a defence of Irish interests within the British imperial framework, not outside of it. Irish heroes remained 'loyalists' in the American sense.

**Caitriona Kennedy (University of York)** *Domestic servants as linguistic and cultural intermediaries in eighteenth-century Ireland*

The labour of domestic servants has often been described as essential but largely invisible. In histories of eighteenth-century Ireland too, servants can be understood as performing important, if occluded, work. In Daniel Corkery's classic study of the Hidden Ireland, it was through their servants that the surviving Catholic gentry retained their connections to the Irish language and its literary traditions. For Sean Connolly and others, servants functioned as cultural intermediaries between Gaelophone and Anglophone words, softening the asperities of the penal-era regime, and facilitating the 'functional bilingualism' of the Protestant Ascendancy.

Despite the significant role ascribed to servants in these diverging narratives of eighteenth-century Ireland, we still know relatively little about the everyday linguistic dynamics of the household. While in late seventeenth-century texts like the *Moderate Cavalier* (1675), Irish-speaking servants were identified as sources of cultural and linguistic and contamination, by the early 19th century the servant, and in particular the figure of the wetnurse, was being re-evaluated as an agent of 'transcultural reconciliation'. Addressing the largely uncharted history of the eighteenth-century household as a cultural contact zone, this paper will offer some preliminary observations on the service relationship as a site of linguistic transmission and transition.

## 4b Staging Ireland in London: adaptation, patriotism, and finance

**Jenny Buckley (University of Galway)** '*Extra! Extra! Play All About it!' – The American Revolution and the War of the Afterpiece*

It has long been recognised that the London patent theatres, operating under a Royal license, were proxy arenas for the staging of war and patriotism. During the American Wars of Independence, Irish playwrights John O'Keeffe, Frederick Pilon, and Richard Brinsley Sheridan wrote a series of afterpieces for Covent Garden and Drury Lane that restaged events overseas for audiences back home. Exploring how news cycles fed into dramatic production, this paper offers an initial look at how breaking news impacted the theatrical calendar – and the impact 'timeliness' had on box office receipts.

**David O'Shaughnessy (University of Galway)** *Gulliver on Stage*

Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels* (1726) is the best known novel of the eighteenth century. This paper will survey the novel's impact on the Georgian stage, with adaptations and derivatives providing opportunities to launch the careers of child actors as well as to make political comment. It will pay particular attention to David Garrick's *Lilliput* (1756), Charles Bonnor and John O'Keeffe's *Friar Bacon, or Harlequin Gulliver* (1783), and the anonymous *Gulliver amongst the Lilliputians* (1814), and consider commercial as well as critical success.