

# 30th Conference of Irish Historians, NUI

## Maynooth, 2011

### Speakers & Abstracts

**Guy Beiner** is a senior lecturer in modern history at Ben-Gurion University of the Negev, Israel. He was a Government of Ireland scholar at University College Dublin, a Government of Ireland Research Fellow at Trinity College Dublin, and a National Endowment for the Humanities Fellow at the Keough-Naughton Center for Irish Studies in the University of Notre Dame. His book *Remembering the Year of the French: Irish Folk History and Social Memory* (Wisconsin University Press: 2007; issued in pbk 2009) has won numerous international awards.

**Ciara Breathnach** lectures in history at the University of Limerick. Her research focuses on the social, economic and cultural history of nineteenth-century Ireland. She has recently completed 3 articles on the Irish in New Zealand and is currently working on the social history of medicalisation and corporeal care in Ireland 1860-1922.

**Edel Bhreathnach** is Deputy Director, UCD Mícheál Ó Cléirigh Institute. She is a medievalist who has worked on many topics in early and late medieval Irish history including Tara, Co Meath, the intellectual history of medieval Ireland, landscape surveys and the mendicant orders in late medieval Ireland. She coordinated the national commemoration 'Louvain 400' and manages the Mícheál Ó Cléirigh Institute's projects and seminars.

**Joseph Clarke** is lecturer in Modern European History in Trinity College Dublin. His research revolves around the political and cultural history of France during the Revolutionary and Napoleonic periods. He has published *Commemorating the dead in Revolutionary France: Revolution and remembrance, 1789-1799* (Cambridge University Press, 2007 and 2011) along with a number of articles and essays on Revolutionary war culture and the rôle of ritual in French Revolutionary politics. The main focus of his current research is an IRCHSS-funded study of the relationship between customary religious culture and French Revolutionary politics in the aftermath of the Terror. This project, entitled 'Revolution, revival and reaction: the culture and politics of religion in France from Republic to Restoration', charts the impact of revolutionary dechristianisation upon the cultural values and political identities of the generation that came of age in France during the 1790s.

**Gabriel Cooney**, MRIA, is Professor of Celtic Archaeology and head of the School of Archaeology at UCD. A specialist in the Neolithic era, he is the co-Principal Investigator of the Footprints strand of the PRTL-funded research programme of the Global Irish Institute at UCD into the Mesolithic-Neolithic transition, and the development of early medieval society

in Ireland in a comparative context. A member of the RIA Committee for Archaeology, and founding editor of *Archaeology-Ireland*, he is a member of the editorial board of *World Archaeology*, and chairman of the Historical Monuments Council of Northern Ireland. He is author of, among other publications, *Irish prehistory: a social perspective* (with Eoin Grogan (1994)); *Landscapes of Neolithic Ireland* (2000), and *Key Recommendations from the Royal Irish Academy Forum: Archaeology in Ireland: A Vision for the future* (2007). He is currently completing a book on death in prehistoric Ireland.

Vanessa Harding is Professor of London History at Birkbeck, University of London, where she teaches undergraduate and graduate courses on medieval and early modern London, the family, disease and death. Her research, including several funded research projects, combines different approaches, including demography, environmental history, and topography, as well as social history and the history of material culture, to reconstruct social interactions and networks in the expanding metropolis. She has published numerous articles and essays on aspects of this topic, and advised on archaeological publication programmes; her book *The Dead and the Living in London and Paris, 1500-1670* was published by Cambridge University Press in 2002.

**James Kelly**, MRIA, is Cregan Professor of History, and Head of the History Department at St Patrick's College, Dublin City University. His main research interests lie in the areas of Irish political and social history in the period 1660-1820. His publications include *Poyning's Law and the making of law in Ireland, 1660-1800* (2007), *The Proceedings of the House of Lords, 1771-1800* (3 vols, 2008); *Sir Richard Musgrave, 1746-1818: ultra Protestant ideologue* (2009), *Ireland and medicine in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries* (edited with Fiona Clark) (2010), and *Clubs and Societies in eighteenth-century Ireland* (edited with Martyn Powell) (2010).

**David Lederer** is a senior Lecturer in history at NUI Maynooth. He has published widely on the history of suicide. His monograph, *Madness, Religion and the State in Early Modern Europe: A Bavarian Beacon* (Cambridge, 2006) won the Gerald Strauss prize from the 16th Century Society for best book in Reformation history. He has held various fellowships (Alexander-von-Humboldt Foundation, the IRCHSS, the Fullbright Foundation and the German Academic Exchange Service) and has served as visiting professor to the Catholic University of America, the Chinese University of Hong Kong and the Ludwigs-Maximilian University in Munich. Research for this paper was supported by a grant from the Wellcome Trust for the History of Medicine.

**William Murphy** is a lecturer in Irish Studies at the Mater Dei Institute of Education, Dublin City University. He is co-editor of *The Gaelic Athletic Association, 1884-2009* (Irish Academic Press, 2009), which was awarded the Best Sports History Edited Collection published in English in 2009 by the North American Society for Sport History. His primary interest is in the history of the Irish revolution and this interest is currently focused on political imprisonment during that period. His articles on Fenian prison memoir and their influence, and suffragette prison tactics and their influence in Ireland were published in 2009 and 2007 respectively. His monograph *Political Imprisonment and the Irish, 1910-1921* will be published by Oxford University Press later this year.

**Elizabeth O'Brien** is a Research Fellow with the UCD Mícheál Ó Cléirigh Institute. An archaeologist and historian, she has worked for many years on burials and burial practices in late prehistoric and early medieval Ireland and Britain. She has published widely on the subject and is the primary researcher for the Heritage Council INSTAR 'Mapping Death'

project which has been undertaken since 2008 by the UCD Mícheál Ó Cléirigh Institute and the Discovery Programme. Dr O'Brien has also excavated many important sites including Dundrum Castle, Co Dublin, Durrow, Co Offaly, Ballyman, Co Dublin, Ballymacaward, Co Donegal.

**Cormac Ó Gráda**, MRIA, is a professor of economics at UCD. His recent books include *Famine: A Short History* (Princeton, 2009); *Ireland's Great Famine: Interdisciplinary Perspectives* (Dublin, 2006); and *Jewish Ireland in the Age of Joyce: A Social Science History* (Princeton, 2006). His current research (with colleague Morgan Kelly) focuses on the economic history of England before the Industrial Revolution.

**Eunan O'Halpin**, MRIA, is Bank of Ireland Professor of Contemporary Irish History at Trinity College Dublin. He was previously Professor of Government at Dublin City University (1998-2000). Educated at UCD and Cambridge, he has written widely on aspects of twentieth-century Irish and British history and politics. He is a Member (2003) of the Royal Irish Academy and a Fellow (2003) of Trinity College Dublin, and an elected member of Board (2005-12). At Trinity, Professor O'Halpin has supervised ten eleven Ph.Ds to completion. He is a member (2005-8) of the Board of Trinity College, and chairman (2006-) of the Information Policy Committee of Board. He is also a member of the Department of Justice Archives Advisory Group, a member and former chairman of the Royal Irish Academy National Committee for the Study of International Affairs, of its National Committee for History, and of its Irish Constitution project board. He is a joint editor of the Royal Irish Academy Documents on Irish Foreign Policy series, and a member of the advisory boards of *The Historical Journal* and of *Twentieth Century British History*. His next book (with Daithí Ó Corráin), *The Dead of the Irish Revolution*, is in preparation for publication by Yale University Press. He is currently preparing two monographs *Diplomacy, security and the Northern Ireland crisis, 1965-1998* and *Between two evils: Afghanistan and the belligerent powers in the Second World War*.

**Clodagh Tait** is a senior lecturer in the Department of History, University of Essex. Author of *Death, Burial and Commemoration in Ireland, c.1550-1650* (2002) and co-editor of *Age of Atrocity: Violence and Political Conflict in Early Modern Ireland* (2007), she has published articles on childbirth, baptism, naming, Catholic religious devotion, commemoration, martyrdom, and riot and protest, and is completing a survey of the cultural and social history of the British and Irish Isles in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

**John Wolfe** took undergraduate and doctoral degrees at the University of Oxford, before holding posts at the Institute of Historical Research and the University of York. In 1990 he joined the Open University (based in Milton Keynes), where he has been Professor of Religious History since 2004. He has served as Head of the Religious Studies Department, and as Associate Dean (Research) in the Faculty of Arts. His publications include *The Protestant Crusade in Great Britain, 1829-1860* (1991); *God and Greater Britain: Religion and National Life in Britain and Ireland, 1843-1945* (1994); *Great Deaths: Grieving, Religion and Nationhood in Victorian and Edwardian Britain* (2000), and *The Expansion of Evangelicalism: The age of Wilberforce, More, Chalmers and Finney* (2006). He currently holds a fellowship funded under the UK Research Councils' Global Uncertainties programme, for a project on 'Protestant-Catholic Conflict: Historical Legacies and Contemporary Realities', which aims, among other things, to set new work on Northern Ireland sectarian tensions in a broad historical and comparative framework, and will conclude with a major conference in Belfast in September 2012.

## Postgraduate Speakers

**Darragh Gannon** is currently engaged in graduate study at NUI Maynooth.

**Justin E. Lane** is attached to the Institute of Cognition & Culture, School of History & Anthropology, QUB.

**Valerie Moffat** graduated with an MA Design History and Material Culture (NCAD/NUI UCD) in 2009.

**James McCafferty** is a Hume scholar currently engaged in graduate study at NUI Maynooth

**Bronagh McShane** is a Hume scholar currently engaged in graduate study at NUI Maynooth.

**Natalie Wilcoxon** graduated from QUB in December 2010 with an MA in Irish History.

## Conference Abstracts

### **Skeletons in the Closet: Forgetting to Remember the Dead of '98 in Ulster**

**Guy Beiner**

‘The past is never dead. It’s not even past.’  
(William Faulkner, Requiem for a Nun)

On the face of it, the case of the 1798 Rebellion in counties Antrim and Down shows the trappings of ‘collective amnesia’ par excellence. Predominantly Presbyterian communities strongly implicated in a failed republican rebellion against the Crown subsequently realigned their political allegiances towards unionism, loyalism and Orangeism and deliberately censured public recollections of insurgency. Recent research suggests that in the immediate aftermath of the rebellion such acts of *damnatio memoriae* may not have been as comprehensive as once thought and therefore the ‘time of death’ of memory should be post-dated into the early nineteenth century. At a closer look, however, it appears that the troubled legacy of the past did not simply pass away. Attempts to proscribe problematic memories tend to instigate complex practices of recalcitrant remembrance, often masked as forms of sham forgetfulness. Far from being completely forgotten, the dead of '98 loomed heavily on social memory in Ulster. Local traditions – repeatedly reformulated in popular culture and documented over two centuries in private correspondence, antiquarian studies, local histories, folklore collections, historical fiction, drama, poetry, song books, provincial newspapers, journals, travel guides, and museum collections – reveal how communities and individuals in the north of Ireland professed to forget, yet found myriad ways to recall, commemorate, reconstruct, and reinterpret memories of the dead. Inspection of these repositories of vernacular historiography offers insight into the ambiguous nature of social forgetting in Ulster, which oscillated between recurrent efforts to bury recollections of past embarrassments and the resurrection of tenacious counter-memories.

### **Burial in early medieval Ireland: politics and religion**

**Edel Bhreathnach and Elizabeth O'Brien**

'Mapping Death' is a multi-disciplinary project, involving archaeologists, historians, anthropologists, geneticists, neurologists and osteoarchaeologists, that has begun to open up a more detailed and grounded understanding of the composition and cultural and medical profile of the Irish population in the period 1st to 8th centuries AD through the evidence of burials. The project was funded between 2008 and 2010 by the Heritage Council under its INSTAR (Irish National Strategic Archaeological Research) Fund. A project-specific database has been designed which documents all published and unpublished burials in Ireland dating to the period 1st to 8th centuries AD. This database is accessible at <https://www.mappingdeathdb.ie>. Each entry records details of gender, age, trauma (e.g. decapitation, battle scars, other indications of violence), disease (e.g. post-menopausal osteoporosis of spine, condition of teeth), diet (e.g. indications of malnutrition or better nourishment among sections of the population), and in the case of females and children evidence for fertility and neo-natal trauma or death. The project has moved into a scientific phase during which samples are undergoing experiments relating to ancient DNA, isotopic analysis, osteoarchaeology and 14C dating. All this information will enhance the archaeological and historical analysis that continues in parallel with the scientific research. This presentation will focus on Irish society as reflected in burials from the first to the eighth centuries AD with particular reference to politics and religion. It will explore how the archaeological record connects with other evidence (anthropological, historical, literary, scientific) to produce a more sophisticated image of daily life in Ireland, of social hierarchy and of important changes such as the conversion to Christianity.

### **Obituaries in provincial Irish newspapers, 1860-1900** **Ciara Breathnach**

This paper will present the preliminary findings of an Irish Research Council for the Humanities and Social Sciences funded project entitled Death and funerary practices, 1829-1901. Nineteenth-century Ireland was a society devastated by mass mortality (Guinnane, 1997), and has been described by some as a 'funerary culture' (Witoszek, 1987). Building on the solid foundations provided by folklorists and scholars of the Irish language, this project explores the changes from oral traditional practices of announcing and lamenting the dead to a more modern method of conveying kinship, belonging and loss through the medium of print culture, in the form of obituaries and epitaphs. Death was, as Lawrence Taylor has stated, an opportunity for furthering social, cultural, and political ends (Taylor, 1989). These 'ends' or 'ambitions' were made clearer through the public expression and consumption of the material culture of death. Nineteenth-century obituaries were very detailed; the dead person was named, their full address was given, their lineage was described, and the occupations of named relatives and colleagues were identified. Place of death was also delineated, although less frequent, cause of death was also mentioned. The significance of professionalism, particularly within military, medical, mercantile and political circles, was also apparent. This paper will provide an overview of the nature of Irish obituaries from class and religious perspectives to highlight how death was commodified in the period under review.

### **'Scuffles in the Cemetery': Death, Dechristianisation and Discord in Revolutionary France** **Joseph Clarke**

In the midst of the Terror, the everyday experience of death and dying was transformed in towns and villages throughout France. As the Revolutionary Republic embarked on a crusade to dechristianise every aspect of French life in 1793, the customs and ceremonies that had

defined the business of death and dying for generations were suddenly replaced by a radically new ritual of death. As the church bells fell silent and the cleric gave way to the civil servant as the chief celebrant of the last rites the cemetery became a secular, and deeply contested, space in communities across France. Drawing on published and unpublished sources from archives across France, this paper explores how the Republic's dechristianisation of death emerged as one of the defining cultural conflicts of the 1790s and asks what was its legacy in the years that followed the Terror? It looks at the new rites the Republic attempted to impose throughout the 1790s and the political, cultural and sometimes-violent conflicts they gave rise to on streets and in churchyards throughout the Republic. As communities across France repudiated the Republic's new rituals in the name of customary culture, the cemetery emerged as the frontline of France's 'culture wars', a space characterized by controversy, conflict and often-bloody confrontation.

### **Charting the changing relationship of living and the dead over the course of Irish prehistory** **Gabriel Cooney**

The paper will discuss broad patterns and trends that we can see in the mortuary record over the span of Irish prehistory (8000 BC- AD 500). Development-led archaeological work has led to both a considerable increase in the data and the need to reconsider some established orthodoxies about mortuary practice over this long period of time. Social models of death and dying often tend to generalise and to see prehistoric mortuary practice as normative and unchanging. By contrast a detailed consideration of the archaeological record from an anthropological perspective reveals very considerable diversity of mortuary practice at particular times in Irish prehistory, depending on the social role and standing of the person. Over time there are very clear indications of important changes in the relationship between the living and the dead and the roles of the dead and the ancestors.

### **'The candles of God are already burning, row on row': responses to death and dying among the Irish in Great Britain during the Irish Revolution** **Darragh Gannon**

The Irish revolution has been discussed, analysed and assessed through the prism of death and dying with considerable frequency. Yet, given this historical attention, accounts of this period have focused to a large extent on the experiences of violence and death through the main protagonists, while, equally, adopting a somewhat claustrophobic approach by confining analyses of death and dying to within Ireland itself to a great degree. This paper attempts to readjust the focus of studies on this theme by exploring the attitudes and responses of an Irish diaspora community to death and dying during the Irish revolution. It commences with an examination of the significance of death and dying in Irish nationalist history to the Irish in Great Britain during this period. Commemorations of death within Irish nationalism and documents the discourse engaged in by the Irish in Great Britain on the Irish nationalist tradition of death and dying are analysed. The reaction of the Irish in Great Britain to political violence, death and dying in Ireland itself between the 1916 Rising and the signing of the Anglo-Irish Treaty is examined as are shifts in outlook and opinion of this Irish diaspora community to these themes and accounts for the varying responses elicited during this period. Finally, the paper addresses the issue of death by hunger-strike during the Irish revolution by comparing two case studies: the Wormwood Scrubbs and Terence Mac Swiney hunger strikes. This research details the activities of the Irish in Great Britain in response to each respective hunger-strike, considers the moral and/or political dilemmas facing that

community in offering or withdrawing support for the hunger-strikers, and assesses the extent to which their taking place in Great Britain intensified the involvement of the Irish community there in the Irish nationalist movement of this period.

### **The last gasp: death and the family in early modern London** **Vanessa Harding**

Although the deathbed was a popular subject in early modern didactic literature in the *Ars Moriendi* tradition, and also featured on stage and in painted and printed images, the practice of dying was more varied and surely in most cases less orderly than these representations would suggest. In reality, at least half of all urban deaths were of juveniles, especially infants. Many adults died accidentally, unprepared, away from home, or as vagrants or lodgers in a strange city; some died in hospitals, prisons or asylums. Even those who died in their own beds were not necessarily spiritually or practically prepared for the event, or able to participate fully in the exchanges expected of them. But a large number died in a home, their own or someone else's, with the involvement of family, friends, neighbours, medical attendants, or pastors. News of an imminent death spread among neighbours, and a wider community might be alerted by the tolling of a bell. After the death, the body required attention, perhaps for some days, before being removed for burial. This paper brings together evidence from different sources, including wills, testamentary litigation, and personal writings as well as demographic sources, to consider responses to the imminence of death and the physical presence of a dying or dead person in the household, and how these might vary with time, circumstance, and social level.

### **Suicide in Eighteenth-Century Ireland** **James Kelly**

The publication in Dublin between 1780 and 1794 of five separate editions of Goethe's *Sorrows of Werter*: a German story in which the tragic hero, disappointed in love, takes his own life, constitutes a vivid, if perhaps unusual, index of the concern manifest in Irish public life in the late eighteenth century with the issue of suicide, and of its relative ubiquity. Though the frequency with which it was publicly reported during the final two decades of the century was exceptional, suicide was neither unusual in eighteenth century Ireland until that point, nor was it a subject that people chose consciously not to mention. There were simply too many incidents of people from all stations of life taking their lives for this to be the case. Yet suicide was traditionally and it continued to be regarded with particular disapproval. That this was so derived in large part from the Christian belief, ostensibly accepted across the denominational divide, that life was not the individual's to take. As a consequence, the main Christian churches, led by the Church of Ireland, denied those who killed themselves the entitlement to burial by the rights of the church and to interment with other Christians. Yet neither this, nor a variety of other social sanctions and taboos, deterred the many thousands who, according to the various media that conveyed information into the public arena, ended their lives in this way. The evidence with which one is required to work to construct a picture of suicide in eighteenth-century Ireland, is problematic; one is dependent on brief and inadequate reports in newspapers, on hearsay, and a variety of partisan and generally hostile observations by sometimes self-appointed guardians of public morality. It is possible, nonetheless, by piecing together various shards of evidence not only to examine attitudes to suicide, but also, by tabulating the various news reports and other public references to 'self-murder', to offer a statistically impressionistic perspective on the phenomenon, which is the purpose of this paper.

## **Communal Life, Communal Death: Ritual Suicide in Twentieth-Century American New Religious Movements**

**Justin E. Lane**

Conceptions of death and dying have played prominent roles in religious studies and anthropology. From post-mortem funerary rituals to pre-mortem rites, many religions and cultures have their own unique ways of dealing with death. Cognitive anthropology, an interdisciplinary approach that focuses on the mental processes of individuals, suicides are oftentimes anomalous. Suicides are often viewed as victims of circumstance or pathology, but the act of ritual suicide, or the collective suicide of a religious group complicates the phenomena. This paper analyzes ritual suicides of new religious movements (NRMs) in twentieth-century North America from a cognitive perspective. Of primary interest are the suicides of The People's Temple and the Heaven's Gate Cult. Both groups had vastly different theologies yet still ended in a collective suicide. While the People's Temple started as a sizable Pentecostal church during the American Civil Rights Movement, the Heaven's Gate Cult was a small NRM with beliefs concerning esoteric mysticism and extraterrestrials. The paper will focus specifically on three questions: Are there any discernable patterns among all three groups leading up to their ritual suicide? What contextual factors may have led to the decision of the members to follow through with such a seemingly counterintuitive act? And finally, what are the strengths and weaknesses of analyzing such events within the theoretical framework of cognitive anthropology? Furthermore, this approach is aimed at generating an understanding of how the individuals within the group might have viewed ritual suicide and what that may mean for each of these groups.

## **Sociology's One Law: Modernity, Protestantism and Suicide in 19th Century Statistical Thought**

**David S. Lederer**

The nineteenth-century association of Protestantism with modernity originated with the works of first-generation sociologists in the new nation of Germany. These three significant neologisms did not occur in a vacuum. Instead, the nascent sociological discipline embedded the modernity thesis within the framework of Prussian-led evangelical nationalism, thereby augmenting its claim to scientific legitimacy. Most leading German academic sociologists (Joseph Schumpeter, Werner Sombart, Ernst Troeltsch and, not least of all, Max Weber – not to mention Karl Marx) discoursed on the modernizing function of the Protestant Reformation for capital formation, social individualization and rise of the modern state, generally presuming a Hegelian statist teleology and, perhaps inadvertently, supporting a patriotic view of Martin Luther as a national founding-father figure. Meanwhile, Émile Durkheim's *Le Suicide* (1897), a fundamental treatise on the scientific nature of sociological statistics, helped to establish what gradually became known as 'Sociology's One Law', i.e. that Protestants always kill themselves more often than Catholics. As a result, it became axiomatic to link the three phenomena – suicide, Protestantism and modernity – in a complimentary tautology: Suicide rates appeared to rise in modern societies and Protestant societies exhibited enhanced features of modernity, such as higher suicide rates. Whether or not this is in fact true is largely irrelevant to the current consideration. Certainly, evidence suggests the evangelical theologians tended to dwell on suicide more often. However, the argument that sixteenth-century Protestants in the Holy Roman Empire were anything at all like nineteenth-century Germans is tenuous at best, anachronistic at worst. What does matter, is that Durkheim's results were, in fact, entirely derivative from earlier nineteenth-century moral statisticians, in particular the German national economist Adolf Wagner, who played a



major role in the Bismarck administration; his former colleague from the University of Dorpat (Tartu), the evangelical theologian Alexander von Oettingen; and the Italian psychiatrist, Enrico Morselli. All three were fervent nationalists, practitioners of sociological fatalism and, especially in Morselli's case, social Darwinism. In their argumentation, high suicide rates among Protestants were simultaneously a social malaise and a badge of modernity in Protestant social bodies, which inherently contained automatic eugenic mechanisms for cleansing themselves of degenerate elements. This paper explores the influence of Protestant nationalism on the interpretation of suicide within the parameters of the modernization thesis by the nascent academic discipline of Sociology.

### **A new kind of death': the Niemba and Irish military funerary ceremonial** **James McCafferty**

On 8 November 1960, nine Irish soldiers were killed at Niemba, Katanga, Republic of Congo in an 'ambush' perpetrated by a body of the indigenous Baluba tribe. On 22 November 1960 these dead men were accorded full military ceremonial interment in 'The Congo Plot' at Glasnevin cemetery. Near neighbours included O'Connell, Collins and de Valera. The fact that this was the first major military funeral since that of Michael Collins gave rise to comment that the Army had carefully staged the occasion in order to boost its image. It was, effectively, a reprise of the July 1960 'departure' parade of the first Irish troops to the Congo. The gun carriage funerary was used only for Lieutenant Gleeson while coffins of men of 'other ranks' were placed on top of high trucks, thus facilitating the estimated 300,000 spectators in witnessing the 'parade' pass down O'Connell Street, Dublin. As in the case of the Collins funeral, the religious ceremonies and interment were attended by leading politicians and churchmen. This paper will examine the symbolism associated with the burial of the Niemba dead, comparing the funeral rites with those of other military funerals and similar state or 'patriot' funerals. Themes presented will include the symbolism of interment in a common grave, evoking, perhaps, a bond of common sacrifice. A parallel will be drawn with the mass-grave of those soldiers who fell in the Belgian Congo, adumbrated by the mass-graves of Irish soldiers after World War I battles in Belgium, the 'Irish' Glasnevin Congo plot being compared to the 'British' Islandbridge war memorial. This paper will argue that the deaths and subsequent burial represent a 'new kind of sovereignty' demonstrated by soldiers of the Irish Republic fallen in a far, foreign land, not fighting the 'Old enemy' but as representatives of a state and its army fulfilling the role of major players on the international stage.

### **Dying for the faith: early modern female martyrdom** **Bronagh McShane**

Throughout history the sacrifice of those prepared to die for their religious convictions has been recorded. Christian Europe executed heretics throughout the Middle Ages. However, these martyrs died largely alone, mourned by relatively few and remembered by fewer. With the onset of the Protestant Reformation and the Counter-Reformation, the phenomenon of dying for the faith and martyrdom was revived with renewed vigour across Europe. The effects of martyrdom permeated every aspect of early modern religious life to an extent not seen during the Middle Ages; the reading of martyrological works, singing ballads about martyrs, attending the executions of martyrs and, in numerous other ways, participation in the veneration of martyrs and martyrdom. Early modern martyrs lent very considerable authority to the doctrines for which they died. This paper will focus on one particular stratum of early modern religious martyrs, namely females. While the sacrifice of male martyrs in the

historiography of the major religious denominations has been widely documented, the sacrifice made by their female contemporaries, the ‘naturally undocumented’ women, has been afforded relatively little scholarly attention. This paper will focus primarily on a very small cohort of Irish female martyrs, such as Margaret Ball, although some other notable female martyrs, for example, the high profile martyrdom of Margaret Clitherow, will be included. The paper will examine what influenced these women to die for their faith, and consider their perceptions of such a death. It will also explore how, in a society in which women’s prescribed role was restricted mainly to the domestic sphere, their martyrdom afforded them public recognition and served to reinforce doctrinal justifications for their respective faiths.

### **Experiencing death in late eighteenth-century Dublin: the case of the Adlercron family, 1774-94**

**Valerie Moffat**

The constant and unremitting presence of death is one of the most striking features of family life in the eighteenth century. This paper will address the topic of ‘death and dying’ by focussing on incidents of death and its aftermath as experienced by a genteel family living in Dublin during the eighteenth century. After childbirth, life-threatening illness was the trial faced by most families. Life in a modern city, however, exposed families to the hazards not only of disease, but also crime. As a commercial centre, Dublin would have been particularly vulnerable to smallpox and other lesser-known strains of viruses and bacteria, while its gracious Georgian façade concealed a massive crime problem that excluded no class, rank or religion. This presentation will centre mainly on narratives relating to family bereavements which are contained in three extant manuscripts relating to the Adlercron family that date from September 1782 to October 1793. It will demonstrate how these incidents were the product of both the hazards and vulnerability associated with life in eighteenth-century Dublin, which tested resilience in the face of unbearable loss and resulted in changes in the social and economic fabric of the family.

### **Death, dying and hunger strike: Cork and Brixton, 1920**

**William Murphy**

This paper will explore death and dying in the context of two linked hunger strikes at Brixton and Cork prisons which took place between August and November 1920. These hunger strikes were the first in modern Irish history to result in death due to prolonged self-starvation. Famously, Terence MacSwiney died at Brixton after seventy-four days on strike, but less often remembered are Michael Fitzgerald and Joseph Murphy who died at Cork. Influenced by Drew Gilpin Faust’s study of death and the American Civil War, this paper will explore hunger strike and death from a series of perspectives. It will examine the extent to which the hunger strikers and their supporters anticipated that their actions would lead to death. The manner in which they prepared for this possibility and what for them constituted a ‘good death’ will also be analysed. The paper will investigate the implications of prisoner deaths for those charged with the day-to-day management of the strikers (prison staff, particularly prison medical officers) and the implications for those at more senior levels in administration and politics. The paper will assess the manner in which the meaning of these deaths was contested, beginning with immediate reactions and the funerals, but also by turning attention upon the ways in which families, fellow strikers, political movements, and the state remembered and commemorated the men.

## **Varieties of Famine Death**

### **Cormac Ó Gráda**

The paper offers a comparative perspective on two aspects of mortality during past Irish famines. The first part is about the causes of death during Ireland's 'other great famine', that of 1740-41. John Rutt's Chronological History (1770) discusses this issue, but here a previously overlooked contemporary medical treatise is analysed for new and more detailed evidence. The second part of the paper reviews the documentary evidence for famine cannibalism in Ireland in the 1840s and earlier.

## **Problematic killing during the War of Independence**

### **Eunan O'Halpin**

This paper is based on the IRCHSS-funded Dead of the Irish Revolution project, which set out to establish who died, when, where, why and by whose hand during the Irish revolutionary period. It addresses key issues arising from that research. Drawing on a wide range of primary sources, it explores both the value and the limitations of a narrow focus on fatalities as an index of political violence and unrest during the War of Independence. The paper focuses on two main categories of fatalities: people killed while allegedly attempting to escape from arrest or to avoid capture – deaths almost always inflicted by the security forces – and people killed as alleged informers, 'spies' or agents, deaths almost always inflicted by separatists or others purporting to be such. The meaning and utility of these two explanatory categories are explored, in terms of how such deaths were understood at the time, and of how more recent scholarship has addressed them and the underlying patterns of largely arbitrary killing which they disclose. The paper also discusses particular issues, which arise in attempting to explain such deaths individually, where official records may be brief and non-committal, and other forms of memory and recollection and explanation particularly problematic.

## **Wandering graveyards, jumping churches and lone Protestants: Devotion, sectarianism and problematic corpses in Irish folklore**

### **Clodagh Tait**

Graveyards and those buried within them were frequently the subject of comment in Irish folk tradition. The presence of the bodies of those locally reputed as saints and martyrs excited local pride and physical remains reputed to be those of holy people were often hailed as having curative and magical properties. The graveyard itself was sacred, and insults against it might be revenged by its ghostly occupants themselves. Though a resource for the community in devotional and practical terms, graveyards and the bodies within them could also be a focus for conflict and competition. While a very large degree of co-interment of Protestants and Catholics was practiced, tensions could appear in certain areas. Tales of the separation of Protestant and Catholic burials, and of churchyards rejecting the bodies of Protestants and even leaving their original sites out of pique when Protestants were buried there can be found throughout Ireland, demonstrating the complications of inter-denominational relationships at local level. This paper argues that the tales told about graveyards assisted in the construction of local and confessional identities and impressed on sacred space the map of human relationships within parishes.

**Death in the Diaspora: the evolution of Jewish death rituals and their impact on the twentieth-century Jew**  
**Natalie Wilcoxon**

From the Passover Haggadah to the Holocaust, Jewish history is tinged with what can be considered a ‘meta-narrative of suffering’. This historic emphasis on suffering and death has impacted the cultural psyche of the Modern Jew, influencing social and communal norms in the Diaspora community. On a more personal level, the ritualized periods of mourning and the yearly commemoration of dead loved ones serve as nearly constant reminders of death; Death has become an integrated part of life in Jewish culture, especially for the most observant Jews. Through a detailed analysis of the evolution of death rituals in rabbinic Judaism, and the elements of death in Jewish historiography and oral tradition, a clear picture emerges of the impact of death on Jewish culture, life and community in the twentieth century.

**The Mutations of Martyrdom in Britain and Ireland c.1850-1920**  
**J. R. Wolfe**

This paper will explore the powerfully emotive constructions of violent deaths on account of religious persecution or perceived patriotic self-sacrifice between the mid-nineteenth-century and the early twentieth. It will begin by discussing the role of the language and legacy of martyrdom in the Protestant-Catholic conflicts of the mid-nineteenth century, on both sides of the Irish Sea. Among Protestants, numerous republications of Foxe’s Acts and Monuments and the commemoration of the Marian martyrs, were both a source of spiritual legitimacy and fuel for the fires of anti-Roman polemic. Similarly among Catholics, at a slightly later date, there was a revival of interest in the Elizabethan and seventeenth-century martyrs such as Edmund Campion, Margaret Clitherow, Philip Howard and Oliver Plunket, reaching something of a culmination with the work of the martyrologist Dom Bede Camm at the turn of the twentieth century. In the meantime, however, the idea of martyrdom acquired more secular and nationalistic connotations, in Britain through initially through Christian military heroes such as Hedley Vicars (killed at Sebastopol in 1855) and above all General Gordon (killed at Khartoum in 1885) and in Ireland through the cult of the Fenians executed in Manchester in 1867. This trend reached its climax in the era of the Great War, with the language of martyrdom readily applied to the war dead and in Ireland to the leaders of the Easter Rising. The paper will conclude with brief consideration of the period since 1920, noting that Second World War dead were not viewed as martyrs in the same way as those of the First, but noting the recurrence of the motif in relation to the IRA hunger-strikers and its demonization in relation to contemporary suicide bombers.