Paris, Dublin and the Republic: Twin Conferences to commemorate Franco-Irish Links in the 1916 Rising

Double conférence sur les relations entre la France et l'Irlande dans le cadre de la commémoration du soulèvement de 1916
Paris: Capital of Irish Culture

A set of twin conferences (one in Paris, one in Dublin), centered on the theme “Paris: Capital of Irish Culture”. The central theme is to explore the longer-term influence of Paris on the evolution of Irish political and cultural thought, and with the long-term aim of showing how this influence fed into the cultural energies that underpinned the 1916 Rising.


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Principal Sponsors
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Ireland and France have a deep and mutually supportive relationship. We go back a long way. The ties that bind us are historic and modern, they are political, economic and cultural. Above all they bind our two peoples together in an instinctive understanding and affection for each other that has endured across centuries.

Gallic merchants traded in southern Irish coastal towns, Hibernian saints built monasteries in post-Roman France, Norman castles rose on emerald hillsides, and Irish soldiers lead and fought in Bourbon armies. In the 21st century Ireland and France have stood shoulder to shoulder through terrorist attacks and economic crises. In 2016, we are engaged in a programme commemorating the thousands of young Irish lives lost in the Somme one hundred years ago. French soldiers and sailors similarly made great sacrifices to reach and fight on the west coast of Ireland in the late 1700s. Our relationship matters.

As Ambassador I have already proudly joined in celebrating unique Irish connections such as the Irish Hospital of Saint-Lô, the Festival Interceltique in Lorient, and the Irish vineyards in Bordeaux.

However, Paris occupies a unique place in the relationship. It has played a special and vital role in the formation of Irish culture and Irish identity. We are reminded of this by the fact that this conference takes place in the Centre Culturel Irlandais – a special institution with a great history emerging through the College des Irlandais. The CCI is located in the heart of Paris, and has been home to so many of our great cultural figures. I have been honoured to partake in many CCI events celebrating great Irish residents of Paris like James Joyce, Oscar Wilde, Eileen Gray, and Samuel Beckett, amongst many others.

The French capital has long served as an incubator for Irish ideas and values. Early signs emerged with Paris’ post-revolutionary role, as the capital of a radical new republic. Many Irish people had long dreamed of establishing an Irish republic - Irish political activists travelled to Paris throughout the late-eighteenth and nineteenth century to learn and to be inspired by the new spirit and values, and even to take home the ideas of the tricolore. This helped to establish Paris in the Irish psyche as a place where new ideas and ambitious visions are born and can be nourished. It gave birth to aspirations to use Paris as a safe haven in which an independent Irish identity could be shaped.

This political and revolutionary ideal naturally found its most inspirational expression in Irish art. Stephen Dedalus set his sights on Paris, as the place he could “forge in the smithy of my soul the uncreated conscience of my race” – he went not to write about Paris but to define his vision of Ireland. Joyce succeeded in this, and published the Great Irish Novel in a Parisian bookshop. While the revolutionaries sought a refuge in Paris from an external oppressor, many Irish artists and writers saw Paris as a safe haven from internal oppression – Ulysses was not welcomed by conservative Irish institutions, and Samuel Beckett spoke of the relief of returning to Paris in 1937 as like “coming out of Gaol in April”. Beckett of course did not merely take from Paris, but gave back, many times over, serving in its Résistance and using the beautiful French language as his main creative medium.

Thankfully, modern Ireland is no longer an inward looking place, but rather one in which modern Joyces and Becketts can thrive and perform at the cutting edge of literature and theatre in a modern progressive environment. However, this does not mean that Paris’ role as an incubator of Irish culture is at an end – rather, in this hyper-connected Europe, our connections are closer and deeper than ever. Paris remains in Irish hearts as a global centre of creativity – for Irish designers, filmmakers, animators, and writers. The Centre Culturel Irlandais will continue to offer a hub to ensure that wonderful Irish artists of today and tomorrow can spend time here and find inspiration in Paris.

And in conferences like this one, organised by inspirational historians Pierre Joannon and Kevin Whelan, we look at how these links between Ireland and Paris took root and grew. Our job now is to tend to them to ensure they flourish.
Message de l’Ambassadeur de France en Irlande
Message from the French Ambassador to Ireland

Depuis plus de quatorze siècles, la France et l’Irlande entretiennent de riches et intenses relations. Saints, soldats, capitaines d’industrie et savants, hommes politiques et écrivains ont tissé la trame humaine d’une amitié unique par sa diversité, sa chaleur, son enthousiasme.

En cette année 2016 nous célébrons ensemble une page forte de ce qui est à bien des égards un roman national commun. Une histoire fondée sur l’aspiration inlassable à la liberté puis à la démocratie, la lutte menée ensemble et séparément pour des valeurs de portée universelle. L’idéal de République, les droits de l’Homme et du Citoyen ont ému et enthousiasmés au même moment aussi bien Irlandais que Français, faisant de nos nations, encore aujourd’hui, les promoteurs inlassables d’un ordre du monde qui ne soit pas que celui de la force.


2016 est l’occasion aussi de reconnaître cette histoire dans sa complexité mais aussi ses connections. Le soulèvement de Pâques 1916 est l’aboutissement d’une lutte inlassable pour la liberté et la souveraineté de l’Irlande qui plonge directement ses racines dans les valeurs de la Révolution française, dans les idéaux d’un Wolfe Tone, d’un Emmet, d’un Fitzgerald. Au même moment les fils de l’Irlande étaient fidèles aux mêmes valeurs de défense de la Liberté et de solidarité active franco-irlandaise en se tenant aux côtés de leurs frères d’armes français sur le front de la Somme, comme les milliers de volontaires irlandais l’avaient fait en 1870-1871 et d’autres le referont entre 1939 et 1945. Pour la France il n’y a pas là deux traditions, mais bel et bien une unité : l’aspiration dans tous les cas à la liberté, la dignité, la souveraineté. Comme la magnifique réaction de solidarité du peuple irlandais envers la France l’a encore démontré de manière éloquente lorsque, récemment, la France était attaquée.

“The Irish mind is moreover like the French lucid, vigorous and positive... France and Ireland have been made to understand each other... It is the French that have come closest to the secret of Ireland”. Ces mots de Thomas M. Kettle, cette formidable figure de l’histoire irlandaise, mort dans la Somme, auteur impérissable du magnifique poème qui illustre sans doute plus que tout autre écrit la profondeur mais aussi les complexités de cette année de commémoration, doivent être une incitation puissante pour nous tous à redécouvrir la force et l’importance de cette histoire commune de la France et de l’Irlande.
Paris exerted a powerful focus on Irish culture from the medieval period onwards. The city proved a powerful magnet for priests, merchants and soldiers from the closing years of the seventeenth century until the final quarter of the eighteenth, and large numbers of Irishmen lived in Paris in this period. Until 1789, continental Europe remained the primary destination for many thousand Irish Catholics, involving a sustained flow of people, resources and skills. In 1789, almost three-quarters of Irish clerical students educated abroad were in France – 348 from a total of 478, and of these, 180 were in Paris.

One-fifth of the eighteenth-century French army was composed of foreigners. 25,000Irishmen entered the French service in this period and they can be broadly considered as within the Jacobite tradition. Across the first half of eighteenth century, the Catholic Irish in France can be envisaged as a nation in waiting, always anticipating a glorious return.

The French Revolution changed the dynamic between France and Ireland. Paris became, as in a sense it remained until Irish independence, the republican capital to which Irish nationalists always looked for inspiration and support. Paris attracted many United Irishmen, including Archibald Hamilton Rowan, then Theobald Wolfe Tone, Lord Edward Fitzgerald, Napper Tandy, Robert Emmet, Arthur O’Connor, and Miles Byrne. Tone described the Revolution as ‘the morning star of liberty’ in Ireland. From the 1820s onwards, there was considerable French interest in Daniel O'Connell’s novel combination of Catholicism plus democracy. French intellectuals wrote extensively about it – notably de Tocqueville, de Beaumont, Lamennais, and Montalembert.

In the second half of the nineteenth century, Paris loomed large in the wider European imaginary. In the famous formulation of Walter Benjamin, it was indeed the ‘capital of culture’ for Europe in this period. Paris functioned as a political capital for fugitive Irish republicans from 1848 which it remained until 1916. Here the Irish learned from other displaced intellectuals who also flocked there – the Poles, Greeks, Russians and Americans. This Parisian link resurfaced with the Young Irelanders in 1848 when Thomas Francis Meagher, Micheal Doheny and John O'Mahony were all in the city. From this circle of influence, the first Irish tricolor was brought back to Dublin. In the 1860s, a third generation of Irish Republicans, the Fenians, arrived in Paris, notably James Stephens, John O’Leary, Thomas Clarke Luby, John Devoy and James J. O’Kelly.

These radical republicans were also joined by the writers. Among the many who resided in Paris were George Moore, Oscar Wilde, J. M. Synge, James Joyce and Samuel Beckett. They were followed by more contemporary figures - Denis Devlin, Brendan Behan, John Montague and John McGahern. Synge was famously being told by W. B. Yeats in Paris to go to the west of Ireland and 'express a life that has never found expression'.

Among the many painters were Robert West, Rose Barton, Paul Henry and Roderic O’Connor. These Parisian links remained strong in the build-up to the 1916 rising and the French exerted a strong intellectual influence. The Irish affinity for France was strengthened by the influence of French orders in Irish schools, and through the cultural and intellectual prestige of French intellectuals who were a source of inspiration to the pre-1916 Irish political activists. Maud Gonne modelled herself on Juliette Adam, the flamboyant editor of La Nouvelle Revue whom she met in Paris in the 1880s.

After independence, with the pronounced inward turn in Ireland, the influence of France waned. The artist J. B. Yeats, commented in 1922 that ‘We must look to ourselves for the springs of our art. We must not look to Paris or London for a pacemaker’. The French connection revived with Ireland’s entry into the European project in 1973. This project allowed Ireland to escape the long imperial shadow of Britain. Today 16,000 Irish people live in France and the two countries maintain close connections. The marvellously restored Irish embassy and the evolution of the Irish College as a cultural centre reflect the vibrant contemporary Irish scene in Paris - for so long an external ‘Capital of Culture’ for Irish people.
Contexte Historique et Culturel


À partir de 1820, les Français s’intéressèrent de très près au mouvement de masse dirigé par Daniel O’Connell, mariage inattendu de la foi catholique et des aspirations démocratiques. Nombreux furent les publicistes à s’interroger sur cette nouvelle problématique: Tocqueville, de Beaumont, Lamennais et Montalembert multiplièrent livres et articles.


PARIS
Vendredi
16 Septembre 2016
Lieu: Ambassade d’Irlande

18h-19h Réception
19h-20h Conférence inaugurale:
Kevin Whelan: Paris, capital of Irish culture: an overview.
Session présidée par S.E. Mme Geraldine Byrne Nason, Ambassadeur d’Irlande en France

Samedi
17 Septembre 2016
Lieu: Centre Culturel Irlandais

9h-9h30 Enregistrement
Session du matin
Modérateur: Mme Lara Marlowe

9h30-10h20 Sylvie Kleinman: Sources françaises du républicanisme irlandais: Wolfe Tone à Paris 1796-1798.
10h20-11h10 Laurent Colantonio: Jeux de miroirs: Daniel O’Connell, un modèle pour la France; le Paris des barricades, un exemple pour la Jeune Irlande.

11h10-11h40 Pause /café

11h40-12h30 Janick Julienne: John Patrick Leonard (1814-1889) au cœur des relations transnationales entre la France et l’Irlande.
12h30-13h Débat

13h-14h Déjeuner
Session de l'après-midi
Modérateur: Wesley Hutchinson

14h-14h50 Anne Magny: Nationalistes de tous les pays, unissez-vous: Maud Gonne et l’agitation révolutionnaire irlandaise à Paris.

15h40-16h Pause/café.

16h50-17h15 Débats & conclusion.
Présenté par Bríona Nic Dhiarmada.

21h15-22h15 Diner

PARIS
Vendredi
16 Septembre 2016
Lieu: Ambassade d’Irlande
**Friday 14 October**

6-7pm Opening Reception

7-8pm Opening lecture: Pierre Joannon ‘Paris, Terre Promise des Irlandais’

*Chaired by H.E. Jean-Pierre Thébault*, Ambassador of France to Ireland

**Saturday 15 October**

9:30-10am Registration

10-11am Seamus Deane, Paris as an Irish crossroads:
The French roots of Irish republicanism

*Chaired by Kevin Whelan*

11-11:30 am Coffee

11:30-12:30pm Barry McCrea: Paris, Dublin and the World
Republic of Letters

*Chaired by Micheal O’Dea*

12:30-1:30pm Lunch

1:30-3:30pm Historical Panel:

**Justin Dolan Stover**: ‘Shattered Glass and Toppling Masonry’: war and damage in Paris and Dublin.

**Tom O’Connor**: The Irish College in Paris in the build-up to Irish independence.

**Phyllis Gaffney**: Roger Chauviré: a French perspective on 1916 and its aftermath.

*Chaired by Maurice Manning*

5:30-7pm Screening of Notre Dame’s Documentary

*1916: The Irish Rebellion*. Narrated by Liam Neeson

7-7:45pm Panel Discussion: Participants: Bríona Nic Dhiarmada, Joe Cleary, Kevin Whelan

*Chaired by Adrian O’Neill*, Second Secretary General, Department of Foreign Affairs

8pm Conference Dinner:

Camden Kitchen, Grantham Street

**Sunday 16 October**

10am-12 noon Walking Tour of 1916 sites in Dublin.
Joe Cleary is currently a Professor in English at NUI Maynooth. He took his doctoral degree at Columbia University, New York, where he studied with Edward Said. He is the author or editor of Literature, partition and the nation-state (2002), The Cambridge companion to modern Irish culture (2009), Outrageous fortune: capital and culture in Modern Ireland (2007) and The Cambridge companion to Irish Modernism (2013). He is currently completing a study of literature and the decline of empire in modern Europe. He takes up a new position as Professor of English at Yale University in 2017.

Laurent Colantonio is professor of British and Irish history at the Université du Québec à Montréal (UQAM). His PhD was dedicated to French political uses of O’Connell. His work focuses on nineteenth century Irish national movements. His research interests also include memory issues. He recently co-authored (with Fabrice Bensimon) La Grande Famine en Irlande (2014). He is about to publish the first volume of a biography of Daniel O’Connell.

Seamus Deane, is the Donald and Marilyn Keough Professor of Irish Studies Emeritus. A distinguished poet, critic, historian, and one of the foremost specialists in France on Ireland, is author of many books including Histoire de l’Irlande et des Irlandais (2009) and Il était une fois Dublin (2013), and of French biographies of Michael Collins and John Hume. Founder of the Ireland Fund of France. Honorary Consul General of Ireland in the South of France since 1973. Awarded Honorary Doctorates by the National University of Ireland and by the University of Ulster, he received one of the first annual Presidential Distinguished Service Awards for the Irish Abroad for his commitment to Franco-Irish relations (2012).

Phyllis Gaffney studied in Dublin, Strasbourg, Cambridge and Florence, and holds a doctorate in medieval French (Cambridge, 1982). She recently took early retirement from UCD, following four decades of teaching French. Her research interests include Old French literature, literary translation, and twentieth-century Franco-Irish relations. Among her books are Healing Amid the Ruins: the Irish Hospital at Saint-Lô (1945-46) and Constructions of Childhood and Youth in Old French Narrative. She is a chevalier dans l’ordre des palmes académiques.

Wesley Hutchinson is Professor of Irish Studies at the Université Sorbonne Nouvelle-Paris 3 where he is in charge of the Research Group, Pôle Irlande. His research interests include Northern Ireland politics, unionist identity issues and cultural policy, especially in relation to minority languages. He is a former President of the Société Française d’Études Irlandaises (SOFEIR).

Pierre Joannon, historian, and one of the foremost specialists in France on Ireland, is author of many books including Histoire de l’Irlande et des Irlandais (2009) and Il était une fois Dublin (2013), and of French biographies of Michael Collins and John Hume. Founder of the Ireland Fund of France. Honorary Consul General of Ireland in the South of France since 1973. Awarded Honorary Doctorates by the National University of Ireland and by the University of Ulster, he received one of the first annual Presidential Distinguished Service Awards for the Irish Abroad for his commitment to Franco-Irish relations (2012).


Sylvie Kleinman studied history and translation in Paris and specialised in Franco-Irish links during the Revolutionary and Napoleonic wars after moving to Ireland. She was an Irish Research Council Postdoctoral Fellow at Trinity College, (2007-2009) and has lectured and published widely on Theobald Wolfe Tone’s military career and adventures in Europe (1796-1798), and cultural nationalism. A member of the Trinity College Centre for War Studies, she currently works in Dublin Castle.

Anne Magny has written her doctoral dissertation on Maud Gonne. Titled, Maud Gonne: réalité et mythe, analyse d’une présence historique et littéraire, it was defended in 1995 at the University of Caen. She has since published several articles on Maud Gonne and the links between French and Irish nationalists.

Maurice Manning is an Irish academic and former Fine Gael politician. Manning was a member of the Oireachtas (Irish Parliament) for 21 years, serving in both the Dáil and the Seanad. From 2002, he served as President of the Irish Human Rights Commission. In 2009 he was elected Chancellor of the National University of Ireland. He has written several books on modern Irish politics, including a biography of James Dillon, and an authoritative history of the Blueshirt movement.
Lara Marlowe is France correspondent for the *Irish Times*. A journalist for the past 35 years, she has lived in Paris, Beirut and Washington. Marlowe holds degrees from UCLA, the Sorbonne and Oxford, and has won three press awards. The French government made her a Chevalier de la Légion d’honneur for her contribution to Franco-Irish relations.


Geraldine Byrne Nason assumed her post as Ambassador of Ireland to France in 2014. She served as Ambassador in Ireland’s Permanent Representation to the EU, has been an international civil servant and Director for Governance at OECD Paris in the 1990s, and headed up Ireland’s National Forum on Europe. She was appointed by the new Irish Government in 2011, as the country’s most senior diplomat within the country’s EU policy. Earlier in her career she served at the Irish Mission to the UN in New York, and also spent time in Vienna, Geneva and Helsinki. Geraldine Byrne Nason was born in Drogheda, and joined the Department of Foreign Affairs in 1982. Elected a Member of the RIA (2014).

Bríona Nic Dhiarmada is the Thomas J. & Kathleen O’Donnell Chair of Irish Language and Literature at the University of Notre Dame since 2008. The author of over 35 screen plays and 10 documentaries, Bríona won the 2007 Television Programme of the Year at the Oireachts na Gaeilge. She returned to join the permanent faculty in the fall of 2008. Professor Nic Dhiarmada produced the internationally acclaimed multi-part documentary series on *1916: the Irish Rebellion*. Professor Nic Dhiarmada is the author of *The 1916 Irish Rebellion*.

Thomas O’Connor is Dean of the Faculty of Arts in NUI Maynooth. He holds a PhD from the Sorbonne. His research interests include early modern European religion, especially Jansenism, and also European migration, especially to and from Britain and Ireland. He is co-director of the Irish in Europe Project and editor of *Archivium Hibernicum*. He is a member of the Irish Manuscripts Commission and of the Fondation Irlandaise (Paris). He has published two monographs, edited and co-edited four volumes in the *Irish in Europe* series, and contributed to scholarly periodicals and essay collections.

Mick O’Dea, a distinguished Irish artist of highly regarded portraits and historical subjects, is President of the Royal Hibernian Academy, Member of Aosdána, honorary member of the Royal Scottish Academy, and a member of the Board of Governors of the National Gallery. He is well known for his paintings of the War of Independence, images culled from found and researched photographs. The very act of painting historic figures redeems them from the chill of photographic documentation into warm living subjects. He is an ardent advocate of the role and visibility of art in the public life of Ireland.

Pierre Ranger completed a PhD thesis on the history of Irish nationalism and of its links with France at the turn of the XIXth and XXth centuries. He published a book on the topic entitled *La France vue d’Irlande, histoire du mythe français de Parnell à l’Etat Libre* and several articles. He taught at Queen's University Belfast and Paris-Diderot University.

Justin Dolan Stover is Associate Professor of History at Idaho State University. Among his research and publication interests are the transnational history of nationalism, war and violence; First World War and interwar period; modern France, the French Revolution and its legacy; modern Ireland and the Irish Revolution and the environmental history of war.

Jean-Pierre Thébault is the French Ambassador to Ireland. A diplomat by training, he occupied a broad range of positions within the French diplomatic service, at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and as a diplomatic advisor to several Ministers. He held various posts in French Embassies across Europe, Asia and at the French mission to the UN in New York. In 2005–2009, he was the French General Consul in Hong Kong. In 2010, he was appointed Ambassador in charge of Environment at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs until his assignment as the Ambassador to Ireland in February 2014.

Kevin Whelan was named the inaugural Michael Smurfit Director of the Keough Naughton Notre Dame Centre in Dublin in 1998. He has been a visiting professor at New York University, Boston College and Concordia University (Montreal) and has lectured in over a dozen countries. He has written or edited over twenty books and over one hundred articles. These include *The Tree of Liberty. Radicalism, Catholicism and the Construction of Irish Identity 1760–1830* (1996), *Fellowship of Freedom: The United Irishmen and the 1798 Rebellion* (1998), and the best selling *Atlas of the Irish Rural Landscape* (second edition 2011).