University of Limerick Special Collections
The Seán Lysaght Papers

Reference Code: IE 2135 P18
Title: The Seán Lysaght Papers
Level of Description: Fonds
Extent and Medium: 5 boxes (103 files)

CONTEXT

Name of Creator: Lysaght, Seán (1957-).

Biographical History: Seán Lysaght was born in 1957 and grew up in Limerick. He was educated at UCD, where he received a BA and an MA in Anglo-Irish Literature. He spent several years in Switzerland and Germany before returning to Ireland to teach and pursue further studies at St Patrick’s College, Maynooth. In 1996, he received a PhD for his biographical study of Irish natural historian Robert Lloyd Praeger, which was published two years later by the Four Courts Press as Robert Lloyd Praeger: The Life of a Naturalist. He now lives in Westport and lectures at the Galway-Mayo Institute of Technology.

Lysaght’s early ventures into poetry won acknowledgment in 1975 at the North Cork Writers’ Festival in Doneraile, where he received first prize in the under 18 category with his poems The Geese, Sacrilege and They Cast off Youth. He also won an award at the annual Patrick Kavanagh poetry festival in 1985. Lysaght’s first collection of poems, Noah’s Irish Ark, was published in 1989 by the Dedalus Press. His second collection, The Clare Island Survey (Gallery, 1991) was nominated for The Irish Times/ Aer Lingus poetry award. In 2007, Lysaght received the prestigious O’Shaughnessy Award for Poetry. His work draws heavily on the natural world, combined with allusions to literature and legend. According to Lysaght, ‘poetry should be a negotiation between what we know to be our limits and the revelation of something we didn’t even realise was there in the first place.’

Archival History: Unknown.

Immediate Source of Acquisition: Donated by Seán Lysaght to the University of Limerick on 15 April 2004.

CONTENT AND STRUCTURE

Scope and Content: Published works (including essays, poetry and book reviews) and correspondence with publishing companies, journals and newspapers illustrating Lysaght’s early development and maturing as a poet.

Appraisal, Destruction and Scheduling Information: All records have been retained.

Accruals: No accruals are expected.

System of Arrangement: The material has been divided by type into three series. Series A comprises letters, mainly from the editors of literary journals and publishing
companies relating to the publication of individual poems, essays and book reviews, and correspondence relating to other works, including Lysaght’s unsuccessful attempts to find a publisher for a novel. Some private correspondence with poets and academics is also included in this section. Series B comprises mainly press cuttings of articles, book reviews and poems written by Lysaght and published in various Irish newspapers. Series C contains mainly journals incorporating Lysaght’s poems, essays and book reviews.

CONDITIONS OF ACCESS AND USE

Conditions Governing Access: Unrestricted access to all items.

Conditions Governing Reproduction: Seán Lysaght retains all proprietary rights and copyright in his published and unpublished writings. Those materials may not be duplicated or reproduced without written permission from Seán Lysaght. Please contact the staff at Special Collections for contact details. Reproduction of any items dated after 1978 containing personal information is also prohibited. For photocopying other material, please consult with the staff at Special Collections.

Language/ Scripts of Material: English.

Physical characteristics: Paper documents in good condition

Finding Aids: A hard copy of the descriptive catalogue is available at the University of Limerick Special Collections.

ALLIED MATERIALS

Related Units of Description: Published works by Seán Lysaght other than those forming part of this collection are available in the Special Collections and the Main Library at the University of Limerick. Please consult the library catalogue at http://193.1.100.111/TalisPrism/.

DESCRIPTION CONTROL

Archivist’s Note: Papers arranged and described by Anna-Maria Hajba.

Rules or Conventions: This description follows guidelines based on ISAD(G) 2nd edition, 2000.

Date of Description: December 2008.
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The Seán Lysaght Papers

A. CORRESPONDENCE

1. Relating to Poetry, Essays and Book Reviews

   1. 1989-1990: undated From Eiléan Ní Chuilleanáin, Cyphers, 3 Selskar Terrace, Ranelagh, Dublin 6, relating to the publication of poems, including *Herring Gull*. Also see 87. 3 items

   2. [c. 1988-1990] From John F. Deane, *The Dedalus Press*, 46 Seabury, Sydney Parade Avenue, Sandymount, Dublin 4, and later 24 The Heath, Cypress Downs, Dublin 6W, mainly relating to the publication of *Noah’s Irish Ark* and *The Clare Island Survey*. The latter was subsequently published by The Gallery Press, for which see 5. 9 items

   3. 1985 From Brendan Cleary, *The Echo Room*, 115 Hartington Street, Newcastle upon Tyne, relating to the publication of the poem *The Worker Ghosts*. Also printed advertisements for the journal. Also see 89. 3 items

   4. 1990-1991 From Fourfront Poets, 1 Cathedral Villas, Limerick, relating to the inclusion of Lysaght’s poems in the Limerick Anthology *On the Counterscarp*. Correspondents include Ciarán O’Driscoll and Jo Slade. 4 items

   5. 1987-1993 From Peter Fallon, *The Gallery Press*, 19 Oakdown Road, Dublin 14, and later Loughcrew, Oldcastle, county Meath, with one draft reply. The letters mainly relate to the possible publication of a collection of poems, subsequently published as *Noah’s Irish Ark* by The Dedalus Press, and to the publication of *The Clare Island Survey*. The letters also contain general thoughts on Lysaght’s poetry and matters pertaining to poetry reading events. In two folders. Also see 3. 35 items
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Years</th>
<th>Correspondence Details</th>
<th>Items</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>1986-1990</td>
<td>From <em>The Honest Ulsterman</em>, at various addresses, mainly relating to poems offered for publication. Correspondents include editors Robert Johnstone and Ruth Hooley.</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>1985-1987</td>
<td>From <em>The Irish Press</em>, Tara House, Tara Street, Dublin 2, relating to poems offered for publication. Correspondents include David Marcus and Anthony Glavin. Also see 40.</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>1987:1989-1991</td>
<td>From Edna Longley, <em>Irish Review</em>, The Queen's University of Belfast, School of English, Belfast BT7 1NN, Northern Ireland. The letters contain requests for book reviews and discuss material offered by Lysaght for publication, including the poems <em>Rook</em> and <em>Skylark</em>. Also see 47.</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>19861987:1989-1992</td>
<td>From the <em>Irish University Review</em>, University College, Belfield. The letters deal with the publication of <em>The Night Rise</em> and <em>The Scareman</em>, Lysaght's essay of John Banville and the preparation of book reviews for the journal. Correspondents include editors Maurice [Harmon], Christopher Murray, Gerald Dawe, Seamus Deane and Peter Denman. Also see 48-52.</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>1989</td>
<td>From <em>North Dakota Quarterly</em>, University of North Dakota, Box 8237, Grand Forks, North Dakota 58202[, USA], relating to the publication of <em>The Village Tailor</em>. Correspondents include poetry editor Jay Meek and editor Robert W. Lewis. Also see 93.</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No.</td>
<td>Year</td>
<td>Details</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----</td>
<td>------</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>1986:1988-1990</td>
<td>From <em>Poetry Ireland Review</em>, 35 North Great George’s Street, Dublin 1, relating to the publication of various poems and essays. Correspondents include Terence Brown, Dennis O’Driscoll, John Ennis and Micheal O’Siadhail. Also see 65-81. 7 items</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>1989:undated</td>
<td>From Dermot Bolger, <em>Raven Arts Press</em>, P.O. Box 1430, Finglas, Dublin 11, seeking Lysaght’s contribution to the pamphlet series <em>Letters from the New Island.</em> 2 items</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>1987</td>
<td>From Edward Power, <em>Riverine</em>, c/o Garter Lane, 5 O’Connell Street, Waterford, relating to poems offered for publication. 2 items</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>1985:undated</td>
<td>Mainly printed rejection slips from <em>Stand</em>, most of them signed by M. A. Blackburn, occasionally with brief personal comments. 9 items</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>1991</td>
<td>From John Liddy, Madrid and Limerick, relating to the publication of Lysaght’s poems in <em>The Stony Thursday Book.</em> 2 items</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>1985:1987-1993:undated</td>
<td>Assorted correspondence from mainly literary journals relating to poems and essays offered for publication; also relating to Lysaght’s articles on Mahon and Banville, including a letter from Professor Rüdiger Imhof. For Imhof, also see 23, 50. 18 items</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2. **Relating to Other Works**

20 1983-1985 Acknowledgements of receipt and rejection slips from publishing companies relating to the manuscript of a novel *The Stone King*. Also a typescript report by A. Farrell on the novel’s plot and structure. 21 items

21 1991 From John Wilson Foster, The University of British Columbia, Department of English, #397-1873 East Mall, Vancouver, B.C. Canada V6T 1W5, requesting the contribution of an essay to *Nature in Ireland: A Scientific and Cultural History* (published by McGill-Queen’s University Press in 1998) and related matters. 3 items

22 1991:1993 From Timothy Collins and Professor Etienne Rynne, University College Galway, and from The Royal Society, London, relating to research carried out by Lysaght in preparation for his biography of Robert Lloyd Praeger (published by Four Courts Press in 1998). 3 items

3. **Relating to Poetry Readings and Competitions**

23 1989:1992-1993 From *The Irish Times Limited*, P.O. Box 74, 11-15 D’Olier Street, Dublin 2, mainly relating to Rüdiger Imhof, and to the nomination of Lysaght’s *The Clare Island Survey* for the Irish Times Irish Literature Prize in the poetry section. Correspondents include literary editor John Banville and administrator Gerard Cavanagh. 5 items

24 1990-1991 From *Alliance Française*, 1 Kildare Street, Dublin 2, relating to a poetry reading event. Also two flyleaves advertising the event. Correspondents include Rémy Durand and Michel Labertrande. 4 items

25 1992 From assistant curator Vona Groarke, *Primary Colours*, Newman House, 86 St Stephen’s Green, Dublin 2, relating to Lysaght’s participation in a poetry readings series. 2 items
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>1985:1991-1992: undated</td>
<td>Assorted letters relating to poetry readings, poetry competitions, poetry conferences and book launches. Also see 5.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>1987:1989:undated</td>
<td>From Dorinda Outram, University College Cork, relating to her interest in contributing an article on Banville in <em>Graph</em>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>1988</td>
<td>From Martin Kirchhoff, Hölderlinstrasse 7, 7250 Leonberg, Germany, discussing philosophy, German literature, Irish life and culture, and his own literary pursuits. The letters are in German.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>1993:undated</td>
<td>From John Wilson Fowler, poet, artist and lecturer in the English language and literature at the University of Stuttgart, Gauss-Strasse 7, 7000 Stuttgart 1, Germany, mainly discussing the technical aspects of writing relating to his own poetic works. Attached to the letters are typescript copies of two epic poems, <em>The Conversion of Pilate, or How the Grail Left Palestine</em> and <em>The Dove and the Tree</em> and handwritten notes relating to the former.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>1986:1988-1989</td>
<td>Letters in German from Burkhard Müller-Ullrich, Irmgard Schmatz, Petra Schramm and Martin Flachmann relating to English literary agents and the translation of various literary works into English and German.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>1984: undated</td>
<td>Letter in French from ‘Daria’ relating to a proposed trip to Ireland; also notes in French by an unidentified hand (possibly that of John Wilson Fowler, for whom see 29) relating to ornithology; and an unsent postcard from Lysaght to Roland Häusler, Switzerland.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td>1980:1988:1993</td>
<td>Assorted letters from private correspondents.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
B. NEWSPAPERS AND PRESS CUTTINGS

1. Articles

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>35</td>
<td>1987</td>
<td>Assorted press cuttings of articles by Lysaght from <em>Colour Tribune</em>, <em>The Sunday Tribune</em> and <em>The Irish Press</em> on ornithology, geology, the Irish fox fur industry, a turbine development in Belfast, and problems affecting a proposed park and amenity development by Dublin Corporation at Landsowne Valley.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. Book Reviews

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
3. Poems


C. PUBLICATIONS

1. Containing Writings by Seán Lysaght

I Aire


II Cobweb


45 1993 Issue no. 9, Summer 1993, edited by Isabelle Cartwright, John Cullen, Peter Hussey and John Phillips. Contains Lysaght’s poem *For Jessica* and a review of his poem *Eye to Eye* by Peter Fallon.

III The Irish Review


IV Irish University Review

48 1986 Copy of Volume 16 Number 1 Spring 1986, edited by Maurice Harmon. Contains Lysaght’s poems *The Night Rise* and *The Scareman*. Two loose leaf reprints of the page on which the poems appear are inserted in the journal.


1 item


1 item


1 item


2 items


1 item


1 item


1 item
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Volume, Issue</th>
<th>Publication Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>60</td>
<td>1977</td>
<td>Volume 6, number 1, January 1977. Contains Lysaght’s poem <em>A Dream</em>.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### VII Maynooth University Record

| 63 | 1997 | Annual publication of St Patrick’s College, Maynooth, edited by Dr Thomas Kabdebo and Dr Chris Morash. Contains a review by Lysaght of *Und suchte meine Zunge ab nach Worten: Liebesgedichte der Gegenwart aus vier keltischen Sprachen* edited by Andrea McTigue. |
| 64 | 2000 | Jubilee issue of the annual publication of St Patrick’s College, Maynooth, edited by Dr Thomas Kabdebo and Dr Chris Morash. Contains a review by Lysaght of *Ghetto Writing: Traditional and Eastern Jewry in German-Jewish Literature from Heine to Hilsenrath* edited by Anne Fuchs and Florian Krobb. |

### VIII Poetry Ireland Review

1 item

1 item

1 item

1 item

1 item

1 item

1 item

1 item

1 item

76 1997 Issue No. 54, Autumn 1997, edited by Frank Ormsby. Contains Lysaght’s poem *Island Scarecrows*. 1 item


78 1999 Issue No. 61, Summer 1999, edited by Mark Roper. Contains Lysaght’s poem *In West Limerick*. 1 item


**IX The Stony Thursday Book**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Issue/Volume</th>
<th>Publication Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td><em>College Green</em>, April 1994 issue published by the Graduate Students’ Union, Trinity College Dublin, edited by Jean-Martin Deniau and Brian Dillon. Contains Lysaght’s poems <em>The Gazebo at Lough Key</em> and <em>A Sense of Plaice</em>.</td>
<td>1 item</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1986</td>
<td><em>The Echo Room</em>, issue no. 4, Spring 1986, edited by Brendan Cleary. Contains Lysaght’s poem <em>The Worker Ghosts</em>.</td>
<td>1 item</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1 item


1 item


2 items


1 item


1 item


1 item


1 item


1 item


102  1975  Pamphlet entitled *Festival of North Cork Writers Doneraile 1975*, containing a selection from the entries in the poetry competition. Contains three poems by Lysaght, who won the under 18 competition at the festival. The poems are entitled *The Geese*, *Sacrilege* and *They Cast off Youth* and contain handwritten comments on their quality. 1 item

2.  **Other Printed Material**