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Centre for
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Zentrum für
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Centre news

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WELCOME TO THE DECEMBER 2023 EDITION OF THE CENTRE FOR IRISH-GERMAN STUDIES NEWSLETTER

It is the season to look back and reflect on the year we have had. It seems to have been an especially long and busy one, and still, it went like a flash. As you will see we were active with organising lectures and readings, working on publications (notably volume 16 of Irish-German Studies), creating material and we had our 20th international conference. Also, there are a number of new members we are delighted to welcome. We had several fantastic speakers who focused on sustainability issues which was new departure for us. Most of these lectures continue to be available via our website – which has been completely revamped this year as you will see here [Centre for Irish-German Studies | University of Limerick \(ul.ie\)](https://www.ul.ie/irish-german-studies). Our book collection continues to grow and we have hopes to have the Gottschalk Collection catalogued and to make it completely accessible by this time next year. There are already a number of exciting activities planned for 2024: we will continue the *Limericker Literaturgespräche* with German writers, have speakers from German-Irish businesses and have one conference in UL (the conclusion of the DAAD project, Promoting German Studies in Ireland, in coordination with the German Studies Association of Ireland (GSAI)). Furthermore, we are also planning to continue the excellent collaboration with the University of Ulster, KAS and the Martens Centre for our 4th joint conference, for which we will be back in the North.

For now, however, thanks so much for all your support and wishing you all a very happy Christmas and the very best for the New Year:
Frohe Weihnachten und einen guten Rutsch!



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TABLE OF CONTENTS

People	3
Congratulatory	7
Update from the Irish-German book collection	8
Update from the DAAD Project Promoting German in Ireland	9
Past Events 2023	10
Guest Lecture The Story Behind the UN Sustainable Development Goals by David Donoghue.....	10
Guest Lecture Sustainability Reporting at German Universities by Philipp Nußbaum	11
Online Workshop <i>AI in Language Education</i> by Antonie Alm	12
Guest Lecture <i>A Personal Journey into Environmentalism</i> by John Gormley	13
Online event <i>Insights into Irish-German Relations & Video Competition</i>	14
Guest Lecture <i>The IIEA Germany Group</i> by Katherine Meenan.....	15
Panel Discussion of Literary Portrayals of Climate Change and Sustainability	16
Song recital series in Ireland and Germany.....	17
32 nd Freudenstadt Symposium on European Regionalism.....	18
DAAD Summer School King's College	18
Launch of Irish-German Studies volume 16	19
Guest lecture <i>Citizen Science – Some Irish roots and branches</i> by Karin Dubsky	20
Guest lecture <i>Zur deutschsprachigen Migration nach Irland</i> by Hermann Rasche	21
Guest Lecture by and art exploration in UL with Michaela Zimmer	22
Workshop and presentation with Killian Sundermann	23
Guest lecture <i>Irish Artist Stella Steyn</i> by Chiara Harrison Lambe	23
20 th international conference in Irish-German Studies and 3 rd UL-UU conference: 'Engaging Cross Borders: Perspectives from Ireland and Europe'	24
Event on Holocaust education in UCC.....	28
DAAD/CIGS Netzwerktreffen.....	29
Christmas Reception & E-book launch	30
'Towards 250 Years of Modern Languages at Third Level', 12 December	31
Publications and Presentations	33
Publications	33
Presentations / Lectures / Videos	35
Upcoming events	36

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PEOPLE

We are delighted to welcome **new members** to the Centre:

Deirdre O'Loughlin, BA, MBS, PhD, MII Grad is Professor of Marketing at the Kemmy Business School in the University of Limerick with over 25 years experience as a researcher and educator. Her primary research critically explores the intersection between marketing, consumption, vulnerability and social/public policy within a number of key contexts including debt and austerity research, family caring, and health and financial services. Her PhD (University of Birmingham) explored the interplay between branding and relationships in consumer financial services and she has



Deirdre O'Loughlin

been engaged in supervising several doctoral studies related to consumption. Her research has been published in a broad range of international peer reviewed journals and book chapters and has been presented at many international conferences. She has co-edited a recent book titled *Researching Poverty and Austerity* by Routledge (2024). She has a BA in International Marketing and Languages (German and French) from Dublin City University, a Master in Business Studies from University College Dublin, and has a keen interest in supporting languages and Irish-German cultural exchange both professionally and personally.

Dr **Anita Barmettler** joined UL in 2014, where she teaches German language, history, literature and current affairs of German-speaking countries with a focus on the Swiss perspective. She is also involved in the teaching of European Film and the Master for



Anita Barmettler

Education. Anita worked as a primary school teacher for several years before deciding to change her field and study Cultural Studies at the University of Lucerne, Switzerland. After completing her B.A. and M.A. she wrote her Ph.D. on the three Kindertransport poets Karen Gershon, Gerda Mayer and Lotte Kramer. Her research interests include transcultural literature and cinema, intercultural communication and language teaching through literature.

Anita has attended many events organised by the Centre for Irish-German Studies in the past and she is looking forward to being a member of the Centre.

Johannes Vith joined the University of Limerick in September 2023. He succeeds Alexandra Zach as OeAD Austrian Lector. Prior to that, he taught at the Ohio State University and the University of Innsbruck, Austria. Johannes is also a PhD candidate in the Department of American Studies at the University of Innsbruck. In his research, he works with film, trauma, and ecocriticism. He is looking forward to being a member of the Centre, where he would like to focus on Austrian-Irish relations and explore Irish-German relations in cinema, both on and off screen.



Johannes Vith

Saying good-bye, thank-you – and welcome!



Natascha Guggi, Elena Schrenk and Dominik Kohl

At the end of the academic year 2022/23, we had to say good-bye to our intern Elena Schrenk and our DAAD Language Assistant Dominik Kohl. Thanks for all your excellent work! In October 2023, Natascha Guggi went on parental leave and we are very happy to congratulate her and husband Florian on the birth of their baby boy Tristan. Until she returns in

March 2024, we have Zibi Nowitzki, Marah Moloney-Weissbrich and Lara Walser covering for her at different times.



Marieke Krajenbrink, Joachim Fischer, Liam Murray and Michaela Schrage-Frueh

Professor **Joachim Fischer**, Emeritus Chair of European Cultural Studies and Senior Lecturer in German at the University of Limerick as well as joint founder and deputy director of the Centre for Irish-German Studies, retired officially in March 2023. We wish him all the best for his retirement – and are very glad that he continues with Irish-German (and European)

activities! And we are delighted to welcome a longtime CIGS-member, Dr **Michaela Schrage-Frueh**, Associate Professor in

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German, back to UL. She has taken over as director of the Centre for European Studies in UL (CEUROS) from Joachim.

Visitors to the Centre for Irish-German Studies

This spring, we had the pleasure to welcome **David Lynn**, **Lesley Lynn** and **Margaret Wynne** to the University of Limerick. David's mother Lisa Fischer was a refugee to Ireland in the late 1930s, Margaret's mother became her best friend. Thank you for your visit!



David and Lesley Lynn with Margaret Wynne



Natascha Guggi, Michaela Schrage-Frueh, Meg Winkler, Anita Barmettler and Ulrike Gasser

In the autumn, Goethe-Institut Dublin Director **Ulrike Gasser** came for a visit and met colleagues from the German section and the Centre and had the pleasure of getting to know our wonderful campus a bit. She also contributed to our video series on “Why learn German”, part of the DAAD-funded project on Promoting German in Ireland. Hope to welcome you again soon, Ulrike!

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Congratulations

Congratulations to two CIGS members, Prof **Helen Kelly-Holmes** (UL) and Dr **Róisín Healy** (University of Galway) on their election to the Royal Irish Academy in 2023, a wonderful achievement!

Prof **Gisela Holfter** was elected to the Deutsche Akademie für Sprache und Dichtung, the first Ireland-based member of this illustrious group of German writers and scholars. Congratulations!

Prof **Kerstin Mey** was elected a member to the Kuratorium of the Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst (DAAD). Congratulations!

We extend our warmest birthday wishes to Prof **Eda Sagarra**, who celebrated her 90th birthday this year. Thank you for all your work on behalf of German Studies in Ireland and such a wonderful supporter of Irish-German Studies over the years. We wish you all the best for the next decade! Eda is not the only *Germanist* with a special birthday this year (though it's the most impressive one). Other retired but still very active colleagues who all contributed to IGS Studies 16, the volume on a history of German Studies in Ireland (see more under publications), who had a special celebration this year include **Gilbert Carr**, **Herbert Herzmann**, **Tim Jackson**, **Colin Walker** and **Tony Williams**. Congratulations to all!



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Update from the Irish-German book collection

The cataloguing of the Glaser Collection and the Gottschalk Collection makes good progress, we are hoping to launch the fully catalogued and accessible Gottschalk Collection at the upcoming 21st CIGS conference in November 2024. We also received further donations, among them books secured for us by **Peter** and **Eliza Williams**. Peter unfortunately passed away in November 2023. He was a great friend of the Centre, participated at many events and through his family had a link to Heinrich Böll – it was Peter’s grandfather Harry Rice who was immortalised as the retired English colonel (“who looked like a mixture between Robinson Crusoe and Mephistopheles”) in Böll’s famous *Irish Journal* in the chapter A Small Contribution to Occidental Mythology (Kleiner Beitrag zur abendländischen Mythologie). Peter, who shared his grandfather’s love of the waterways, featured himself in the Arte production *Die große Literatour – Heinrich Bölls Irland* (2016). Peter is greatly missed, he was always supportive, kind and enormously knowledgeable. RIP Peter.

Another special addition to our book collection, thanks to **Traudi** and **Kenneth Ferguson**, is a facsimile of the *Dankebuch* (1946), a wonderful collection of drawings and letters of children from Saarbrücken, thanking for Irish food donations after the Second World War. It had come to **Tony O’Herlihy** who researched the background and thanks to his endeavours there were a number of media reports, including a programme broadcast on Newstalk FM which later won the first prize of the ‘New York Festival World’s Best Radio Program’ in June 2016 (included on a CD with the facsimile together with the background story by Tony O’Herlihy).

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Update from the DAAD Project Promoting German in Ireland

DAAD-project “Exploring the past, enhancing the current position, and working towards 250 years of German Studies in Ireland, 2022-2024” is led by Gisela Holfter (CIGS, University of Limerick), recent and current presidents of the GSAI (Joseph Twist, UCD; Marieke Krajenbrink, UL; Linda Shortt, MU and Michaela Schrage-Früh, UL), and the project’s Research Assistant Natascha Guggi (UL), currently replaced by Zibi Nowitzki, Marah Moloney-Weissbrich



and Lara Walser on an hourly basis. The first strand, ‘Exploring and learning from the past’ has come to a successful end in 2023 with the publication of *Rückblicke & Reflexionen. A History of German Studies in Ireland* with contributors from all Irish universities and most (former) Institutes of Technology (for more information please click [here](#)). We have also been working on Strand 2 ‘Enhancing German Studies in Ireland today’. A needs analysis of German at

third level institutions today (special thanks to Joe Twist!) identified interesting insights into the perceived challenges and opportunities. We have also kept working on online resources (feedback on our website <https://resources-for-german.com/> is most welcome!) and there are a number of seminars and workshops that have been organised this year and will take place next year. Thanks to extra funding awarded to us by the DAAD this year for the “Promoting German in Ireland” project 2022-2024, we have been able to record short “Why learn German” videos with most of our guest speakers and visitors, they are accessible here: <https://www.ul.ie/artsoc/irish-german/why-learn-german>). Strand 3 will be our conference in 2024 (more info under upcoming events) which will also see the official launch of the resources website.

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PAST EVENTS 2023

Guest Lecture The Story Behind the UN Sustainable Development Goals by David Donoghue



David Donoghue

A red thread running through the Centre's 2023 programme was, in fact, green. Thus, we were more than happy to announce a series of events relating to the challenges posed by an accelerating climate crisis, giving occasion to both interdisciplinary exchange and new encounters. The first of these was welcoming **David Donoghue**, former Irish ambassador to Germany and member of the CIGS Advisory Board, to introduce us to *The Story Behind the UN Sustainable Development Goals* (SDGs) and, clearly, there could have been no one better suited to undergo this task. David was one of the co-facilitators (with Kenya) for the UN negotiations during his time as Permanent Representative of Ireland to the United Nations from 2013 to 2017 in

New York, and his work led to the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in 2015. He has been involved with issues relating to their implementation ever since. In his talk on 7 February, chaired by Prof **Shane Kilcommins**, Provost and Deputy President UL, David drew on this rich experience and shared with his audience a both detailed and entertaining account of the SDGs' drafting, contention and passage, the object of which was to shed light on joint climate policy as something of, in the true sense of the word, global dimension. A full recording of the event is available on our homepage under current projects – sustainability <https://www.ul.ie/artsoc/irish-german/sustainability>.

Guest Lecture Sustainability Reporting at German Universities by Philipp Nußbaum

One considerable challenge to effective climate policy has always been in the difficulty not just to measure the climate impact of various societal and economic agents, but to compare these findings against a common framework. While the establishment of the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) has proven a first step into that direction, their implementation is arguably still hampered by an incongruity of different assessment practices, often resulting in confusing or even contradictory claims by various



Philipp Nußbaum

institutions. To tackle these issues on the level of universities, **Philipp Nußbaum** has been involved in several projects analysing the practices of *Sustainability Reporting at German Universities*, an ambitious and far-reaching endeavour. He reported on the results in his talk on 15 February 2023, chaired by **Andrea Deverell**, Director of the Centre for Sustainable Futures and Innovation at UL. Working as a research and project manager at the Institute for Higher Education Development in Hannover, Philipp has contributed to servicing the ministries of the German federal states, universities and other educational institutions alike. Taking this focus one step further still, he particularly stressed the necessity for future cross-country dialogue and action in his online presentation (which is also accessible via our website [Sustainability | University of Limerick \(ul.ie\)](https://www.ul.ie/sustainability)). The talk also resulted in a subsequent publication, written together with Gisela Holfter and Andrea Derell (see under publications below).

Online Workshop *AI in Language Education* by **Antonie Alm**



Another topic prompting widespread and often divisive debate in the past year was the introduction of new Artificial Intelligence (AI) applications and their employment in larger society. While the availability of machine translation tools such as Google Translate and DeepL has been around for several years now, it was especially the recent presentation of OpenAI's ChatGPT chatbot which brought the issue to the forefront of educational experts' mind with vehement force. The question didn't seem to be whether to adapt AI into language learning at university level any longer, but simply how to. In order to provide a reliable and up-to-date basis to this discussion, Prof **Antonie Alm's** (Head of Languages and Cultures, Otago University Dunedin, New Zealand) online workshop on *AI in Language Education – Google Translate and ChatGPT* on 21 February 2023 aimed to put the results of a recent survey on the use and perceived usefulness of machine translation tools for language learning into practice. Focusing on practical skills for machine translation use, the workshop provided its participants with a valuable opportunity to get to know and exchange ideas on the use of AI in education. It also facilitated a discussion on the appropriate inclusion of machine translation in language education.

**Guest Lecture *A Personal Journey into Environmentalism*
by John Gormley**

A special event was John Gormley's guest lecture on 21 March 2023, chaired by Prof Kerstin Mey, President UL, when we learned about his own *Personal Journey into Environmentalism*. Intimately linked to the Limerick landscape he grew up in, shaped by his experiences in 1980s' industrial Germany (first as a worker for a major lignite company, then as a student at the University of Freiburg), and

looking back on a lifetime in Irish green politics, John himself is a prime example of the intertwining of personal history, an awareness of place, and a green policy rooted in both. The recollections of the former Irish Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government and former Leader of the Green Party



Maurice Carr, John Gormley and Noel McCarthy

covered more than a half-century, and he invited his audience to journey with him through a timespan which saw major changes across communities, countries and ecosystems all over Europe. Throughout his talk and the subsequent discussion, he highlighted the role his time in Germany played for shaping his own perception of environmental matters and the links that exist between the German and Irish Green parties. A full recording of the event is available on our website [Sustainability | University of Limerick \(ul.ie\)](https://sustainability.ul.ie).



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Online event *Insights into Irish-German Relations & Video Competition*

Originally an initiative that sprang from Covid-time restrictions, the annual final of the Irish-German Student Video Competition has been a highlight in the Centre's annual calendar ever since its conception in 2021. In 2023, numerous contributions were submitted from final year German language students from across the country. Following a painstaking first selection round, the videos were presented at an online event on 23 March 2023, which also included guest speakers H.E. Dr Nicholas O'Brien (Ambassador of Ireland to Germany), H.E. Cord Meier-Klodt (Ambassador of Germany to Ireland), Ulrike Gasser (Director Goethe Institute Ireland) and Ralf Lissek (Chief Executive Officer German-Irish Chamber of Industry and Commerce), who discussed their take on current Irish-German relations in conversation with Derek Scally (*The Irish Times*). Afterwards, a combined experts' and audience vote proceeded to choose this year's final winners Rachel Kavanagh, Aoife Kelly, Aine Brassil, Karina Tranets and Caoileann Kelly (University of Galway, *Deutsch-irischer Handel und "Kerrygold"*), Nadja Daly, Aoife Griffin, Ciara Otway and Cliona Hennessy (University of Galway, *Aloys Fleischmann*) and Ciara Hunt, Isabelle Zechner and Jack O'Loughlin (University of Limerick, *Langstreckenbeziehung*) to general applause. Having seen their knowledgeable and, at times, funny videos of Irish-German connections, however, it is safe to say that there was no one in the audience who didn't feel like a winner in the end. The winning video is accessible on the website of the German Irish Chamber of Industry and Commerce: <https://www.german-irish.ie/en/media/translate-to-english-videos/video-competition-university-of-limerick>.

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Guest Lecture *The IIEA Germany Group* by Katherine Meenan



Katherine Meenan

Thinking across boundaries demands both determination and open-mindedness. What it also demands, however, is the existence of a space to gather and exchange knowledge and experience. The Institute of International and European Affairs (IIEA) aims to be just that – a

free-thinking, international-minded Irish think tank that brings together experts and decision-makers from various fields connected to European matters. An independent non-profit organisation, the IIEA was established in 1991 to enhance the understanding of European policy-making in Ireland and is now known for its extensive research and events programme, providing an indispensable basis to the analysis of pressing political and economic issues. We were thus very much looking forward to having Katherine Meenan speak on the history, functions and projects of the IIEA to UL students and staff on 24 March of this year. Katherine, chair of the IIEA Germany Group and an experienced consultant on EU affairs, was happy to share her in-depth insight into the organisation's work, Germany and German-Irish relations with her audience. Most importantly, she made a point to listen to the concerns and ideas of the students in the audience, encouraging them to join in a discussion of current debates, bring forth their own questions and engage in a joint endeavour to tackle the challenges of our times.

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Panel Discussion of Literary Portrayals of Climate Change and Sustainability

While the discussion on environmental matters has long gained the attention of scholars from various fields and arguably led to a noticeable increase in interdisciplinary research, its reflection in contemporary fiction seems neglected at times. How exactly do contemporary authors relate to the experience of a planet in crisis? What different or differing approaches can be found? What characters, perspectives and voices? What distinctions are noticeable across borders, languages, cultures? And last but certainly not least, what role can university-level language teaching play in raising awareness for these matters in a constructive and critical way? To start a conversation on these and many more urgent questions, the Centre's last public event of the spring semester on 20 April aimed to bring together scholars who are passionate about the many expressions of environmental topics in contemporary fiction. Chaired by Dr Laura Linares (Spanish Section, UL), Prof Joachim Fischer (UL, CIGS), Anne Nospickel (UL, DAAD) and Clarisa Novello (UL) joined in a series of short presentations of ongoing research projects, followed by a general discussion and Q&A session. While the outlined projects' topics ranged from meticulously researched dystopian visions of the near future (Kim Stanley Robinson's *The Ministry for the Future*) to gendered power relations (Karen Duve's *Macht*) and displaced



Laura Linares, Clarisa Novello, Joachim Fischer
and Anne Nospickel

level language teaching play in raising awareness for these matters in a constructive and critical way? To start a conversation on these and many more urgent questions, the Centre's last public event of the spring semester on 20 April aimed to bring together scholars who are passionate about the many expressions of environmental topics in contemporary fiction. Chaired by Dr Laura Linares (Spanish Section, UL), Prof Joachim Fischer (UL, CIGS), Anne Nospickel (UL, DAAD) and Clarisa Novello (UL) joined in a series of short presentations of ongoing research projects, followed by a general discussion and Q&A session. While the outlined projects' topics ranged from meticulously researched dystopian visions of the near future (Kim Stanley Robinson's *The Ministry for the Future*) to gendered power relations (Karen Duve's *Macht*) and displaced

family narratives (Andreas Wagner's *Jahresringe*), it was not just the sheer diversity of environmental material that proved to be highly instructive to their audience, but also the variety and adaptability of their approaches.

Song recital series in Ireland and Germany

CIGS member Dr Axel Klein (Frankfurt am Main) was instrumental in devising a programme of Irish-German art songs and having it performed five times in Ireland and Germany during the summer. Under the collective title of 'Liedtreffen', the basic idea was to perform musical settings of German poetry by Irish composers and of Irish poetry by German composers.

The programme included poetry by Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, Joseph Eichendorff, Heinrich Heine, and Friedrich Nietzsche with



Niall Kinsella, Owen Gilhooly-Miles, Amy Ní Fhearraigh, H.E. Cord Meier-Klodt, Axel Klein

music by Arthur O'Leary, Charles V. Stanford, Mary

Dickenson-Auner, and Seóirse Bodley, as well as poetry by Turlough Carolan, Thomas Moore, and Gerald Griffin, with music by Ludwig van Beethoven, Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy, Friedrich von Flotow, and Martin Roeder.

The artists were the Hanover-based soprano Amy Ní



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Fhearraigh, the baritone Owen Gilhooly-Miles, and the pianist Niall Kinsella. The Irish recitals in June at the residence of the German ambassador to Ireland, Cord Meier-Klodt, the Blackwater Valley Opera Festival in County Waterford, and the National Concert Hall were organised in cooperation with the German Embassy, whereas the German recitals in July at the Goethe-Haus in Frankfurt and the Mendelssohn-Remise in Berlin were co-organised with the Irish Embassy.

32nd Freudenstadt Symposium on European Regionalism

Another exciting symposium in Freudenstadt, Black Forest, Germany took place on 7-9 July 2023, this year under the heading “Empowering to create a momentum of change”. Themes discussed included “Europa: a shifting change in Europe? from side by side to togetherness”, “British Isles: post Brexit trauma across the Isles – where’s the road to recovery?” and “Resilience: resiliency through local empowerment”. As in previous years, CIGS was very happy to support this event and our member **Dr Patricia Conlan** was one of the co-organisers. There are already plans underway for the 33rd Freudenstadt Symposium on European Regionalism to take place from 5 to 7 July 2024 in the Black Forest (Freudenstadt, Germany). Stay tuned and share the word for exciting sessions, views and discussions around different dimensions of ‘Connecting Europe’.

DAAD Summer School King’s College

Under the motto: ‘Germany in the World: Intersecting Inequalities in Challenging Times’ the DAAD Summer School, organised by colleagues at King’s College London in cooperation with the Centre for British Studies at Humboldt-Universität Berlin and our Centre for Irish-German Studies, took place in London from 17 to 21 June. The interdisciplinary summer school was designed for PhD students and advanced MA students from across the Humanities and Social Sciences in the UK, Germany and Ireland, as well as from the

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DAAD-funded global network of Centres for German and European Studies. The summer school's chosen focus on "Intersecting Inequalities" required participants to consider the urgent implications of recent global challenges and social movements for reassessing the discipline of German Studies in a comparative contemporary perspective. There were great guest lectures and literary readings but particularly impressive were the presentations by all participating postgraduate students – the future of German studies seems to be in good hands.

Launch of Irish-German Studies volume 16

Irish-German Studies vol. 16, *Rückblicke und Reflexionen: A History of German Studies in Ireland* (Trier: WVT 2023) was launched at the annual conference of the Association for German Studies in Great Britain and Ireland in Trinity College Dublin by H.E. Cord Meier-Klodt, German Ambassador to Ireland, on 31 August 2023. The volume includes contributions on German Studies at third-level institutions in Ireland, covering, for the most part, developments



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Ionad an Léinn Gaeilge-Ghearmánaigh

and experiences during the last decades, with some contributions focussing on a longer time span. Over thirty academics from nineteen Irish universities and Institutes of Technology (now Technological Universities) look back and reflect on aspects of German Studies at their respective institutions and their personal experiences, presenting a portrayal of a subject that was introduced at third level in Ireland in 1776, a world first. Contributors include Joachim Beug, Karl-Bernhard Bödeker, Sheree Borge, Kristin Brogan, Gilbert Carr, Úna Carthy, Anthony Coulson, Claus Derenda, Sabine Egger, Dan Farrelly, Carmel Finnan, Dore Fischer, Joachim Fischer, Barbara Freitag, Herbert Herzmann, Gisela Holfter, Tim Jackson, Fionnuala Kennedy, Rosemary Little, Jessica Lysaght, Gillian Martin, Rosanna Molloy, Vincent O'Connor, Pól Ó Dochartaigh, Hermann Rasche, Hugh Ridley, Eda Sagarra, Manfred Schewe, Christiane Schönfeld, Colin Walker, Jenny Williams, Tony Williams and Arnd Witte. It was lovely to see many of them at the launch. Special thanks to all contributors and also the peer reviewers as well as Natascha Guggi and Mary Rose Curtis who provided great technical and editorial assistance.

Guest lecture *Citizen Science – Some Irish roots and branches* by Karin Dubsky

On 25 September we were happy to welcome **Karin Dubsky**, BA MSC Director of Coastwatch and coastal ecologist to UL. Karin was born in Germany and her family moved to Ireland when she was 10. She has become a very well-known environmental activist and member of the environmental NGO community, post graduate scientist researcher, consultant and teacher. Her research work and practical citizen science projects range from nature, especially wetland protection, over waste, oil and litter prevention and control, to coastal zone management and better application of environmental law and respect for traditional knowledge and

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rights. Her inspiring presentation focused on citizen science as a way to strengthen informed citizen participation in environmental decision-making and access justice. Some strong citizen science initiatives started in Ireland before the term was coined and spread across Europe, from air pollution indicator mapping to the annual Coastwatch autumn shore survey, which was used as case study. These long-term projects sit beside a wealth of tailor-made short-term citizen science initiatives which illustrate the wealth of opportunity we have to discover, monitor and influence the state of our environment.

*Karin Dubsy*

Guest lecture *Zur deutschsprachigen Migration nach Irland* by Hermann Rasche

On Monday, 16th of October 2023, the Centre for Irish-German Studies had the pleasure of welcoming CIGS member Dr **Hermann Rasche** to the University of Limerick. Dr Rasche, who retired as Senior Lecturer in German from the University of Galway a few years ago, talked about the fascinating story of German migrants coming to Ireland. From Irish Palatines settling around Limerick in the 18th century and butchers and jewellers as well as colourful individuals in the 19th and 20th centuries to highly qualified German migrants arriving in Ireland today, Dr Rasche gave his

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Hermann Rasche

audience a comprehensive and entertaining overview over German migration to Ireland.

A big thank you to Dr Rasche for this interesting talk on an important part of Irish-German history!

Guest Lecture by and art exploration in UL with Michaela Zimmer

Enhancing the classroom experience with Irish-German encounters we were fortunate to have Berlin-based artist **Michaela Zimmer**



joining our fourth-year students in German on 18 October. She also took one group on a fascinating field trip, exploring the wonderful art collection we are lucky to have all around us in the University of Limerick. Focussing especially on Irish-German artists such as Imogen Stuart,

Michaela spoke about the many approaches to and collaborations in art and also gave examples from her own work.

Workshop and presentation with Killian Sundermann

A special highlight was the visit of Irish-German comedian **Killian Sundermann** on 25 October 2023 who talked about his Irish-German upbringing and the inspiration of his hugely successful and very funny video portrayal of Irish-German encounters. He introduced new material, explained the background how some of the videos came about and gave tips on video productions.



*Killian Sundermann, Marta Giralt, Liam Murray,
Florence LeBaron-Earle, Gisela Holfter*

Special thanks to Dr Marta Giralt and her Intercultural Episodes project which made this visit possible.

Guest lecture *Irish Artist Stella Steyn* by Chiara Harrison Lambe

Chiara Harrison Lambe, a PhD candidate in Art and Visual History at Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, co-supervised at the University of Limerick, gave a fascinating insight into her dissertation project, which has the working title ‘Stella Steyn (1907–1987): Figuration and Female Identity’. It will be the first monograph on understudied Irish-Jewish painter and printmaker Stella Steyn, notable for being the only



Chiara Harrison Lambe



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Ionad an Léinn Gaeilge-Ghearmánaigh

Irish artist to have studied at the Bauhaus in Germany. The project explores how multiple types of marginalization – against her pluralization of style, migrant status, ethnicity, and gender – worked together to ensure Steyn’s posthumous omission from the conventional art historical canon, with a focus on her post-war self-portraits and images of women. As mentioned before, Chiara was awarded the National Gallery of Ireland’s inaugural Sarah Cecilia Harrison Essay Prize in 2022 for her essay ‘Stella Steyn – A Name to Remember’. Thank you, Chiara, for fascinating insights into the life of this remarkable artist!

20th international conference in Irish-German Studies and 3rd UL-UU conference: ‘Engaging Cross Borders: Perspectives from Ireland and Europe’

Organised by the Centre for Irish-German Studies (CIGS), University of Limerick in coordination with the Centre for Public Administration, Ulster University, the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung UK & Ireland office, the Wilfried Martens Centre for European Studies and the Embassy of Germany in Ireland, the conference took place at the Glucksman Library, University of Limerick 16-17 November 2023. It built on the success of the two earlier events. The initial conference was entitled ‘Unions, Break-ups and Special Relationships – Aspects of the Irish-German-UK Relationships’ (the 18th International Conference in Irish-German Studies) and was held at the University of Limerick, 4-5 November 2021. The second conference was held at Ulster University, 3-4 November 2022, and entitled ‘New Ways of Engagement and the International Context: Northern Ireland and Ireland’. In this third event, entitled ‘Engaging Cross Borders: Perspectives from Ireland and Europe’, some of the themes and issues considered hitherto were explored in

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more detail and new aspects, such as sustainability questions, and a stronger focus on the students' perspective were included.



Gisela Holfter and H.E. Cord Meier-Klodt



Lunch at Plassey House

Dean of the Faculty of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences Dr **Sandra Joyce** welcomed all delegates to the conference and UL and congratulated the Centre on its 20th international conference, followed by CIGS director Prof Gisela Holfter who thanked all contributors and supporters of the conference. H. E. Dr **Nicholas O'Brien**, the Irish ambassador to Germany, emphasised the importance of the work the Centre does and gave a succinct overview of the state of current relations between Germany and Ireland. **Robert Henneberg**, Cultural Attaché at the German Embassy in Dublin, mentioned ongoing exchanges in areas such as education, energy supply, infrastructure, and digital affairs. Senior Researcher at the Wilfried Martens Centre for European Studies Dr **Eoin Drea** expressed the need for more interactions like this conference to develop relationships more between Ireland, both North and South, and European countries in the political, social, cultural, and economic context.

Jack O'Connor, Centre for Sustainable Futures and Innovation, UL, chaired the first panel session that focused on the 'Current and

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Future Challenges Across Borders in Comparative Perspective’ in which **Anne Nospickel**, DAAD Lektor, UL, **Brian Ronayne** and **Marah Moloney-Weissbrich**, UL students, **Robert Henneberg**, Cultural Attaché, German Embassy in Dublin, and **Brian Morgan**, PhD student at Ulster discussed the challenges society faces, today and in future to balance the environment with economic and social sustainability.

In the next session, ‘Reflections on Key Anniversaries in Cross-Border Relations’, former ambassador **David Donoghue** introduced the speakers and gave a general background from his first-hand experience of the Good Friday Agreement. **Bertie Ahern**, former Taoiseach, in conversation with **Deaglán de Bréadún**, journalist and author, then discussed the recent anniversaries in Ireland and Northern Ireland, the current situation in Northern Ireland and some more general political topics, providing fascinating insights and sharing memorable moments.



*Bertie Ahern, Gisela Holfter, Paul Carmicheal,
H.E. Nicholas O’Brien, Deaglán de Bréadún,
Robert Henneberg, Katie O’Connor, David
Donoghue, Eoin O’Drea*



*H.E. Nicholas O’Brien, Gisela Holfter,
Paul Carmicheal*

On Friday morning, President of the University of Limerick, Prof Kerstin Mey welcomed all the participants to the second day of the conference at the University of Limerick and acknowledged the



Centre for Irish-German Studies

Ionad an Léinn Gaeilge-Ghearmánaigh

importance of the discussions and the work of the Centre for Irish-German Studies.

Dr Bernadette Connaughton, University of Limerick chaired a roundtable discussion on the ‘European Union and Cross Border Relations’. Barbara Nolan, Head of Representation, European Commission Representation, Dublin, Dr Eoin Drea, Senior Research Officer, Martens Centre, Brussels, **Caitriona Mullan**, Cross Border Co-operation Specialist and Emeritus Professor Joachim Fischer, UL, examined the added value of the EU’s contribution to facilitating cross border relations, and the ways the EU can assist in sustaining cross border dialogues and partnerships. In a session on ‘Trade Across Borders’ chaired by Dr **Conor Little**, University of Limerick, the four speakers **John McGrane**, Director General, British-Irish Chamber of Commerce, **David Parkmann**, Head of DE International, German-Irish Chamber of Industry and Commerce, Dr **Lisa Claire Whitten**, Queen’s University, Belfast (joining online), and Dr **Niall Moran**, Deputy Director Brexit Institute, DCU reflected on how trade across borders from Ireland, Northern Ireland, the UK, and Europe has developed.

Dr **David O’Donoghue** chaired a session on ‘Crossing Borders – The Role of Languages, Culture and Identity’ with **Neasa Ní Chianáin**, documentary film maker, Dr **Florence Le Baron-Earle**, School of Modern Languages and Applied Linguistics, UL, Prof **Helen Phelan**, Director of the Irish World Academy of Music and Dance, UL, and well-known authors **Donal Ryan** (UL) and **Hugo Hamilton** (Dublin/Berlin) illustrating the many ways in which film, music, language and writing transcends borders, bringing people together from many different backgrounds to give a sense of belonging.

Lucinda Creighton, CEO of Vulcan Consulting chaired the final session on ‘Cross-Border Engagements – Imagining the Future’ in which the panel, **Ruairí de Búrca**, DFA Assistant Secretary,

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Ireland, UK and Americas, **Richard Hill**, Northern Ireland Joint Secretary, North/South Ministerial Council, **John Gormley**, former Green Party leader, and Ambassador of the Federal Republic of Germany, H.E. **Cord Meier-Klodt**, reflected on the wide range of topics discussed during the two-day conference. Concluding the session and the conference, the panel agreed that consistently investing in people, cultural experience and cohesion will help to build a new vision for the future in Ireland, Northern Ireland and Europe. Closing the conference, local organiser Prof Gisela Holfter thanked all speakers and helpers and especially Prof **Paul Carmichael** (UU) and **Katie O'Connor** (KAS) for their work and assistance putting this year's event together, another excellent example of institutional cooperation between two universities across the island of Ireland, in partnership with the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung, the Marten's Centre and the German Embassy. Feedback on the event was very positive and there is a solid foundation to plan further activities to maximise future engagement, most likely next November in Belfast.

Katie O'Connor, MA in European Studies UL

Event on Holocaust education in UCC

On 24 November CIGS member Dr **Claire O'Reilly** (UCC) organised a seminar with two leading scholars from Munich (Prof Anja Ballis) and Nottingham (Dr Gary Mills) in digital Holocaust education, who delivered a workshop in UCC, discussing new developments in Holocaust education, advancements in digital media and narrating oral histories in education research. This seminar resulted from an earlier successful event on 'Understanding the Past to (re-)Inform the Future: The role of NS-Resistance yesterday and its Relevance today' that took place in February.

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DAAD/CIGS Netzwerktreffen



The first DAAD/CIGS network meeting started with a welcome from UL President Prof Kerstin Mey (who is a former DAAD *Lektor* herself and was recently elected to the DAAD Kuratorium) on 7 December. She welcomed Ruth Krahe, Director DAAD London, Alexander Bleistein,

the Deputy Director and all the DAAD *Lektors*, Teaching Assistants based all over Ireland as well as *Ortslektorin* and CIGS member Dr Sabine Egger at the University of Limerick. It was a very productive and enjoyable meeting with presentations and exchanges of experiences and best practise. We are now planning to continue with this format, though probably a bit earlier in the next academic year for the benefit of newly arrived *Lektors* and Teaching Assistants.



Friederike Gelke, Julia Weiss, Theresa Lange, Leonard Lüer, Annika Hynek, Kerstin Mey, Alexander Bleistein, Gisela Holfter, Anne Nospickel, Antonia Musolff, Ruth Krahe

Christmas Reception & E-book launch

In the afternoon of 7 December 2023, we hosted our annual Christmas reception in the Plassey House. It included the launch of the Irish-German memoir *Singing our Song: The Memoirs of Hellegard Leckebusch (1944-2023)*. The book was launched by Michael Burrows, Bishop of the Diocese of Tuam, Limerick and Killaloe, who spoke movingly about the late Hellegard Leckebusch.



Gisela Holfter, Bishop Michael Burrows, Eoin Stephenson and Patricia Conboy



Great Christmas carol singers

Her wonderful memoirs are insightful and humorous reflections on Ireland in the 1950s and later from the perspective of a young German immigrant. They are now accessible as an e-book on the Centre website, see [Singing our Song | University of Limerick \(ul.ie\)](https://ulsites.ul.ie/singing-our-song). The memoirs were brought together by Silke Püttmann (who joined the event online from Germany) and Kenneth Ferguson who came with his wife Traudi from Dublin to join the event. The reception also featured joyful singing of Christmas carols, good conversations as well as delicious treats.



‘Towards 250 Years of Modern Languages at Third Level’, 12 December

The Royal Irish Academy (RIA) proved to be a great host and provided a beautiful setting, and RIA President Prof Pat Guiry offered a warm welcome to the large audience of the sold-out event.

Micheál Martin, Tánaiste and Minister for Foreign Affairs and for Defence, gave a brilliant opening keynote address and stressed that language learning “is a cornerstone of our



(from right): Keynote speaker Micheál Martin, MC Noelle O Connell, Linsey Farrell, Claire McGee and Barbara Nolan

educational progress, allowing us to embrace linguistic diversity and foster meaningful connections across borders”. Noelle O Connell, CEO European Movement was a wonderful MC, engaging and very knowledgeable. Insightful and inspiring statements also came from the other speakers on both panels: “Taking Stock – Policies, Challenges and Opportunities”: Linsey Farrell, Deputy Secretary for Education Policy and Children's Services, Department of Education, NI; Claire McGee, Head of Education and Innovation Policy IBEC; Barbara Nolan, Head EU Commission Ireland and Karen Ruddock, Director PPLI Languages Connect and “Why Languages Matter” with Prof Luke Drury, ALLEA Vice President, former President RIA; Linda Ervine, Bainisteoir Tionscadal Turas, Mísean Oirthear Bhéal Feirste, Cearnóg Skainos, Béal Feirste; H.E. Vincent Guérend, French Ambassador to Ireland; Liam Ryan, CEO

Centre for Irish-German Studies

Ionad an Léinn Gaeilge-Ghearmánaigh

SAP Ireland and Prof Michael Semple, The Senator George J Mitchell Institute for Global Peace, Security and Justice, Queen’s University and Talk for Peace. The event was supported by the Austrian, Belgian, French, German and Swiss embassies, cultural



#languages250

institutions such Alliance Francaise, Goethe Institut, Foras na Gaeilge, Instituto Cervantes, EUNIC and the academic institutions: DCU, Maynooth University, Mary Immaculate College (Faculty of Arts and Centre for Transnational Studies), Queen’s University, TCD, UCD, Ulster University, University of Galway, University of Limerick (School of Modern Languages and Applied Linguistics and of course the Centre for Irish-German Studies). The feedback to the event was unanimously positive, with “inspiring” and “empowering” being frequent comments. So all the work and organisation of the “250 Years of Modern Languages at Third Level” working group (consisting of Prof Gisela Holfter (UL, chair), Prof Jürgen Barkhoff (TCD), Prof Janice Carruthers (QUB), Dr Úna Carthy (ATU), Prof Michael Cronin (TCD), Dr Sabine Egger (MIC), Tanya Flanagan (One Voice for Languages & St. Farnan’s Post Primary School), Dr Déirdre Kirwan (former Principal, Scoil Bhríde Cailíní), Prof Bettina Migge (UCD), Prof Isabel Torres (QUB)) paid off. We are already greatly looking forward to the next big event in Belfast on 29 November 2024, in 2025 in Limerick and in 2026 in Trinity College Dublin – where we will celebrate the quarter millennial of the establishment of its Chairs in Modern Languages in 1776.

The Centre for Irish-German Studies is proud to support the excellent initiative #languages250 – with the next events coming up in Belfast in November 2024, in Limerick in 2025 and in 2026, in time for the 250th anniversary, Trinity College Dublin.



Speakers and organising committee



Guests at the fully booked RIA event

PUBLICATIONS AND PRESENTATIONS

Publications

Joachim Fischer, *Mary from Tipperary: A German poem of the Repeal era by the early socialist writer Georg Weerth (1822-1856)*. *Tipperary Historical Journal 2023*, pp. 50-59 [in memoriam Prof Eoin Bourke].

Gisela Holfter (ed.), *Rückblicke und Reflexionen – A History of German Studies in Ireland*, Trier: WVT 2023, Irish-German Studies volume 16, 314pp. Including contributions by Centre members Gisela Holfter (Introduction, pp. 1-15), Hermann Rasche (on University of Galway, pp. 93-105), Pól Ó Dochartaigh (on the University of Ulster, pp. 135-145), Joachim Fischer (on UL, pp. 189-



Centre for Irish-German Studies

Ionad an Léinn Gaeilge-Ghearmánaigh

204), Sabine Egger and Christiane Schönfeld (on Mary Immaculate College, pp. 289-294 and pp. 295-299).

Gisela Holfter, Andrea Deverell and Philipp Nußbaum, Ein irisch-deutscher Ansatz zur Diskussion von Nachhaltigkeit und Nachhaltigkeitsberichten im Hochschulkontext, *HIS-HE:Magazin* 1/2023, pp. 6-8; https://medien.his-he.de/fileadmin/user_upload/Publikationen/Magazin/HIS-HE_Magazin_2023-01.pdf (English language version also published as An Irish-German Approach to Discussing Sustainability Reporting in Higher Education, 5 May 2023, <https://medien.his-he.de/publikationen>).

Fergal Lenehan, Depicting European Federalists in Fiction: Richard Coudenhove-Kalergi in Bernhard Setzwein's *Der böhmische Samurai* (2017) and Heinrich Mann in Colm Tóibín's *The Magician* (2021). *The Journal of European Studies*, Vol 53, Issue 3, 2023, pp. 215-233. (Open Access: <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/00472441231188780>)

Fergal Lenehan has also been reporting on Germany and German culture from an Irish perspective as Germany correspondent for the Irish online magazine *TheCurrency.News*, see <https://thecurrency.news/>

Michaela Schrage-Früh and Jürgen Wehrmann, Using Autoethnography in e-Tandems for Fostering Glocal Cultural Awareness: An Irish-German Virtual Exchange. *Journal of Virtual Exchange* 6/2023, pp. 1-11. <https://doi.org/10.21827/jve.6.38832>



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Ionad an Léinn Gaeilge-Ghearmánaigh

Singing our Song: The Memoirs of Hellgard Leckebusch (1944-2023), Mettmann 2023, edited by Silke Püttmann and Kenneth Ferguson, accessible at [Singing our Song | University of Limerick \(ul.ie\)](https://www.ul.ie/singingour-song/)

Presentations / Lectures / Videos

Joachim Fischer, Ireland and Germany in the European Union: Semi-centenary reflections. 2023 GILBA Awards event, University College Dublin, 9 December 2023.

Gisela Holfter, Reflections on the Recent History and Developments of German Studies in Ireland, Association for German Studies in Great Britain and Ireland annual conference, TCD August 2023.

Gisela Holfter, Diversität, Kultur und binationale Beziehungen im deutsch-irischen und irisch-algerischen Kontext, Internationale Akademische Woche, Universität Vechta, 12-16 June 2023.

Gisela Holfter, Deutsch-irische Projekte im Kontext von 250 Jahren Deutsch an Universitäten, Movens-Tagung Geschichte(n) erzählen, Ljubljana, Slovenia, 8-11 June 2023.

Gisela Holfter, An Irish-German approach to sustainability as a topic for academic institutions, DAAD annual Lektorentreffen, Cumberland Lodge, Windsor Park, England, 27 May 2023.

Gisela Holfter, Joyce and Böll as Europeans, Achill Island Heinrich Böll Weekend, May 2023 (member of invited panel with Michael O'Loughlin, Sujata Bhatt, Michael Augustin).

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Fergal Lenehan, Heroism and Timidity in the Post-Civil War Free State: Hermann Harder's *Irische Heimkehr* (Irish Journey Home) (1937). Conference on Multilingual Legacy of Ireland's Revolution and Civil War. 23 March 2023. Queen's University Belfast

UPCOMING EVENTS

We are delighted to host a Masterclass for PhD students with Dr habil. **Monica Albrecht**, Universität Vechta, 6-9 February 2024. Any interested PhD students in German registered at Irish universities (or their supervisors) please contact Gisela.Holfter@ul.ie by 23 January 2024.

We are also greatly looking forward to continue with our *Limericker Literaturgespräche* in March 2024. Among the participating authors will be **Torsten Schulz** and **Roman Ehrlich**, supported by the DAAD project on promoting German in Ireland and the Dr Beate Schuler Fund. It is envisaged to stream both readings and to make them accessible online on our website. We are also planning an Irish-German business lecture series for spring 2024 and have already secured **Liam Ryan** from SAP and speakers from Lidl Ireland. There is also next year's Irish-German video competition, which is provisionally scheduled for March.

In the autumn we are organising our 21st conference in UL (the conclusion of the DAAD project, Promoting German Studies in Ireland, in coordination with the German Studies Association of Ireland (GSAI)) and are planning to continue the excellent collaboration with the University of Ulster, KAS and the Martens Centre for our 4th joint conference, then back in Northern Ireland where we will also have the next #languages250 event.

A lot to look forward to – here's hoping it will be another good year for Irish-German relations!

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