Centre for Irish-German Studies

Ionad an Léinn Éireannaigh-Gearmáinise

Centre *news*

December 2025 *No. 28*

WELCOME TO THE DECEMBER 2025 EDITION OF THE CENTRE FOR IRISH-GERMAN STUDIES NEWSLETTER

With Christmas almost upon us we take the opportunity to look back and reflect on the activities of the year. And there were many: conferences, lectures, roundtables and readings, preparing publications and creating new material resources. Highlights include continuing the *Limericker Literaturgespräche* series with German, Austrian and Swiss (and Welsh-Irish) authors, and conferences on Ardnacrusha, the history of German Studies and the importance of languages in the context of the upcoming 250-year anniversary of the establishment of the first chairs of Modern Languages (in TCD in 1776). Furthermore, thanks to the 2025-2027 DAAD funding award under the Promoting German in Ireland scheme, we have been able to add considerably to our www.resources-for-german.com website and materials. Since September 2025 Dr Anita Barmettler has been active as the new co-director of the Centre and we are delighted to welcome several new members to the Centre. We are looking forward to the activities planned for 2026, as outlined at the end of this newsletter.

Thanks so much for all your support (and again a special shout-out to Dr Beate Schuler)! Wishing you all a very happy Christmas and the very best for 2026: *Frohe Weihnachten und einen guten Rutsch!*
Nollaig Shona agus Athbhliain faoi mhaise daoibh!
Gisela and Anita

PEOPLE AND PROJECTS

One of our longest-serving members, Associate Prof **Marieke Krajenbrink**, retired in September of this year. Marieke was a key pillar of German Studies in UL for almost three decades and has been a key supporter of Centre activities from the beginning, whether as co-organiser of conferences (she was the key person for the conferences on "Ireland and the German-speaking countries - Irish-Austrian and Irish-Swiss Relations" and "Wagner and Wagnerism: Contexts – Connections – Controversies"), many publications and other events such as lectures and readings. From the beginning she has also been involved in our DAAD-funded projects on promoting German in Ireland, in that case due to her role as the co-chair of the German Studies Association of Ireland. The Centre is greatly in her debt, and we are delighted and very grateful that she continues to be involved in our activities (but of course also wish her some well-deserved time for other, non-academic activities now).

This autumn we also said good-bye to our CIGS research assistant **Natascha Guggi** who worked primarily on the DAAD 2022-2024 funded project entitled "Promoting German Studies in Ireland - Exploring the past, enhancing the current position, and working towards 250 years of German Studies in Ireland". As part of this project Natascha created and worked on the webpage www.resources-for-german.com, which has been very well received and is continuously growing with new material being added. We are sad to see her go but wish her all the best in her new position as Teaching Fellow at Trinity College Dublin. There is no doubt that our loss is their gain, and of course we are delighted that Natascha is continuing to be a member of CIGS and that she stays involved

as a colleague in the 2025-2027 DAAD Promoting German in Ireland scheme.

Colleagues will be saddened to learn of the recent death of Prof **Jochen Vogt** (1943-2025). Jochen was appointed to the Gesamthochschule Essen and saw its evolution into the Universität Duisburg-Essen. His distinctive contributions to our subject – starting with *Aspekte erzählender Prosa* and (this a title which expressed much of his academic presence) *Einladung zur Germanistik* – included definitive work on the detective story. His work on Heinrich Böll expressed his great love for Ireland, and fittingly his last conventional contribution to the subject was on *Irisches Tagebuch* in the *Heinrich Böll Handbuch* 2025. Among his many enduring contributions to Irish German relations over many decades, Jochen opened up the pleasures and values of a lifelong interest in German literature, language and culture to young and established Irish scholars and teachers, helping direct and stimulate their research. His warm and generous-spirited presence will be sorely missed.

Eda Sagarra / Hugh Ridley

Gertrude Degenhardt passed away in her German home town Mainz in November 2025. Her unique illustrations, paintings, cartoons and caricatures are immediately recognisable. Her often grotesque Irish characters have an almost iconic status: their straggly red hair is even redder, her fiddlers fiddle even more ferociously, her hippies seem even hippier, and her buskers are bursting with bravado...What might at a first glance seem to be a slightly over the top serving up of ye old Irish clichés, in fact works splendidly. Her quirky, well-intentioned sense of humour always shines through; there is never even a whiff of maliciousness. Gertrude had a sharp eye for foibles, for what makes the Irish "tick",

and, of course, she was gifted with superb crafts(wo)manship. "Trude" was born on 1 October 1940 in New York, grew up in West-Berlin and had worked since 1966 as an independent painter and graphic artist. A commission to illustrate the Short Stories of Liam O'Flaherty brought her to Ireland in the early 1970s; meeting the Furey Brothers in particular instilled a life-long interest in Irish music. Gertrude came back every year since, with her husband Martin (Martin was the brother of the highly acclaimed German balladeer Franz-Josef Degenhardt, a kind of German Christy Moore). They bought a traditional cottage just outside An Spidéal, Co. Galway, her second *Heimat*. In March/April 2026, Kennys Art Gallery in Galway will stage a major retrospective exhibition of Gertrude's work. RIP.

Hermann Rasche

New Members



Marah Moloney Weissbrich officially joined the Centre for Irish-German Studies in May 2025 as the new three-day research assistant. She is originally from Mainz in Germany but has been living in Ireland since 1999. Marah returned to education in 2020 to complete her BA in Arts, taking English Literature, Sociology and History while adding German as an additional module. She has also just completed her Master's degree in English Literature. Besides her work with the Centre Marah has taught German at primary level as part of the "Say Yes to Languages" initiative, supported by PPLI/ Languages Connect and is currently teaching her second term of German upskilling classes for Primary School teachers.

Anke Halmschlag is the new one-day a week research assistant. Originally from the Wilstermarsch and later the Aachen region she studied Archaeology, Provincial Roman Archaeology, Germanic Antiquity and Nordic languages in Munich. After she finished her Master's she moved to Ireland in the early 1990s and worked on excavations all over Ireland. Some of her excavations were on Skellig Michael for four seasons, the wetlands of Corlea bog in Longford and Trim Castle.



After having four children she moved away from excavations and started to work with her German language skills by giving grinds in German and helping with orals and mock exams for Junior and Leaving Cert in local schools. She has joined the Centre of Irish-German Studies to go back to work after raising her children and to use her native language.

Stephanie Brence joined the University of Limerick as OeAD-*Lektorin* in MLAL in September 2025. She completed her Master's degree in German and English for secondary school teaching at the University of Teacher Education and the University of Graz. Furthermore, she gained experience with DaF/DaZ while working in an after-school supervision facility for children and youth with migration background for several years and also completed a post-graduate course on teaching German as Second/Foreign Language. Before joining UL Stephanie taught German and English in Deutschlandsberg, Styria, Austria from 2021 to 2025.



PAST EVENTS 2025

Limericker Literaturgespräche

Reading of *Zu Gast im Westen* by Ingo Schulze

As part of our *Limericker Literatur-gespräche* series, supported by the DAAD, we were thrilled to welcome **Ingo Schulze** on 19 March 2025. Schulze, a celebrated author and president of the *Deutsche Akademie für Sprache und Dichtung*, began the event with a reading from his most recent book *Zu Gast im Westen – Aufzeichnungen aus dem Ruhrgebiet* (2024). In the book, he writes about his six-month stay in the Ruhr region and his experiences and impressions there.



Dr Marieke Krajenbrink, Ingo Schulze



Ingo Schulze

He engaged in a lively discussion with students and enriched the reading with personal anecdotes about his creative process, which captivated the audience. We were delighted to show him around our beautiful campus and impress him with our Irish-German book collection. The reading has been uploaded to our website, and we plan to add pedagogical material to our readings in the near future, both for learners and teachers.

Reading of *Blasse Tage* (2022) by Zarah Weiss



Zarah Weiss

Zarah Weiss, born in 1992 in Düsseldorf and raised in the countryside of the Lower Rhine, presented a reading at the University of Limerick, supported by the OeAD, on 28 March. Known for her short story collection *Blasse Tage* (2022), Weiss has received numerous literary awards and scholarships, reflecting her significant contributions to contemporary German literature. She started the reading with "Weißer Rauch", followed by a second short story called "Private Investigations". After each story, there was time for questions and discussions with the students. The students were prepared for the reading in advance by taking part in a creative writing workshop with Zarah Weiss and OeAD *Lektor* Johannes Vith. Thanks go to all who contributed to this memorable event.

Reading of *Orcawale* (2020) by Jasmin Riter



Jasmin Riter

For the third reading of German-speaking authors, the Centre for Irish-German Studies had the pleasure of welcoming German author **Jasmin Riter** on 11 April as part of the *Limericker Literaturgespräche* series. Jasmin has won numerous awards, including the short story competition "Und in der Nacht fielen die Sterne vom Himmel" and the *Literaturpreis der Region Schwaben*. Her stories illuminate the challenges faced by marginalised protagonists and offer profound insights into social issues.

The reading of "Die Räuber", from her short story collection *Orcawale* was a great success and attracted many students and colleagues in UL. Her excellent reading and the fascinating topic of migration background and prejudices in the German school system led to a lively discussion with the students and UL staff. Thanks also to the Goethe-Institut for reaching out to us with regard to the reading.



Jasmin Riter, Dr Marieke Krajenbrink

Roundtable "Neutrality in a Globalised Europe"

On 7 April, the Centre for European Studies and the Centre for Irish-German Studies jointly organised a roundtable named "Neutrality in a Globalised Europe: Opportunities, Challenges, and Future Perspectives of Austria, Ireland, and Switzerland". The discussion centered around political neutrality and beyond with the Swiss ambassador to Ireland **H.E. Jenny Piaget**, and the Austrian ambassador to Ireland **H.E. Melitta Schubert**. Other members of the panel were UL colleague **Dr Scott Fitzsimmons** and UL Master's student **Conor Scannell**. CIGS members Dr Anita Barmettler and OeAD *Lektor* Johannes



Dr Scott Fitzsimmons, Conor Scannell, H.E. Jenny Piaget, H.E. Melitta Schubert, Dr Anita Barmettler, Johannes Vith (left to right)

Vith moderated the roundtable and the discussion with the audience afterwards. The event was a great success and showed the importance of the topic.

Intermedial / Intercultural: GUNDERMANN film + Gerhard Gundermann songs concert



David Robb, his band and Andreas Dresen (centre)

On 15 April, East-German singer-songwriter and excavator operator Gerhard Gundermann was commemorated in a DAAD, Centre for Transnational Studies & CIGS sponsored day of events in Limerick City. Acclaimed filmmaker **Andreas Dresen** attended a screening of his feature film GUNDERMANN in the early afternoon. After the film screening, there was a panel discussion and Q&A with the director Andreas Dresen and singer/songwriter and Reader in Music **Dr David Robb** (Queen's, Belfast), who translated Gundermann's songs into English. Dave and his band performed their "Post-Industrial Songs of Gerhard Gundermann" in the Belltable that evening. Andreas Dresen then joined the band for a couple of songs in German. The screening and concert were free for UL and Mary Immaculate students. The lovely event was organised by CIGS member **Associate Prof Christiane Schönfeld**, Mary Immaculate College and was part of the activities of the German Screen Studies Network's DAAD PGS project.

CIGS Irish-German Video Competition and Unternehmen Deutsch



Gisela Holfter, Noémie Njangiru, Michaela Schrage-Früh, Max Passberger, Vera Ryan, Jacob Aylmer, Paula Riese, Andrea Battes, Rasto Racz (left to right)

On 30 April, the 2025 Centre for Irish-German Studies annual video competition for students studying German at Irish universities took place and was a wonderful and memorable event, showing off many facets of Irish-German relations. The booked-out event was, like last year, a joint undertaking with the fantastic Unternehmen Deutsch competition, run by the **Goethe-Institut e.V.**, so a huge thank you to **Andrea Battes** (the UD key organiser) and Goethe-Institut director **Noémie Njangiru**! Noemie was part of the video expert group, together with **Stefanie Ziska**, CEO of the German-Irish Chamber of Industry and Commerce (who very generously sponsored the competition again - thanks so much!), the German embassy (represented by **H.E. David Gill** and Cultural Attaché **Wolfram von Heynitz**), the Irish ambassador in Berlin, **H.E. Maeve Collins**, who participated online, and of course **Derek Scally** from the *Irish Times*, who expertly engaged with all groups after their respective videos were shown.

Warmest congratulations to the winning group from the University of Galway: Hanna Fairchild, Brendan Gunning and Claddagh OReilly (with their video on Roger Casement). Runners-up were the

UL Business German students: Joshua Fortune, Johanna Gnann, Meadhbh Hodnett and Mark Ryan ("Der Einfluss der deutschen Technokultur auf das irische Nachtleben"). The third prize was claimed by Lorna Derrane, Alana Rogers, Anna Staeglin-Tucker and Anna Triller of Maynooth University ("Treffen Sie die Mutter").



The winning team: Hanna Fairchild, Claddagh O'Reilly and Brendan Gunning

CIGS Research Day

On 21 May 2025, we had our first **CIGS Research Day** in the Appellate Court Room of the Glucksman Library at the University of Limerick. The day brought together scholars, as well as students, for a vibrant exchange of ideas and research.



Roundtable on Migration

The morning featured a series of focused project meetings for the DAAD PGS 2025–2027 project, including sessions on the Limericker Literaturgespräche, Business German, and German pedagogy. These discussions highlighted the dynamic work being done across institutions, with contributions from UL, Maynooth University, MIC and beyond.

After lunch, the afternoon turned to reflection and forward-looking dialogue. A discussion on the upcoming 30th anniversary of CIGS (1997–2027) set the tone for future planning, followed by a thought-provoking roundtable on migration with former ambassador David

Donoghue, Dublin, Dr Stefano Angeleri (Law, UL), Associate Professor Aileen Dillane (Music, UL); Associate Professor Sabine Egger (German & Centre for Transnational Studies, MIC) and Associate Professor Andrew Shorten (Politics, UL). This panel brought together voices from many different areas, underscoring the interdisciplinary strength of the Centre.

Movens Conference – Anfänge und Entwicklungen: Beiträge zur Fachgeschichte der Germanistik und darüber hinaus.

On 5-6 June, the Centre for Irish-German Studies had the pleasure to welcome colleagues from all around Europe for the Movens conference at the University of Limerick: "Anfänge und Entwicklungen: Beiträge zur Fachgeschichte der Germanistik und darüber hinaus" (On beginnings and developments in German Studies). This was the third time the international Movens network of German scholars met in Limerick and we are proud in UL to be a founding member of the network which will have its 20th anniversary next year (for more information see https://www.movensnetwork.org/). The conference was a great success with presentations on the history of German studies in Ireland, Britain, Germany, Sweden, Slovenia, Poland and the Czech Republic, giving a broad overview of the developments and challenges in the discipline from all around Europe. Presentations also included topics ranging from Medieval literature up to the present day. Among the speakers were Prof Monika Unzeitig, Prof. Phyllis Gaffney; Prof Nicola McLelland, Prof Robert Gillett, Dr Hermann Rasche, Prof Elisabeth Wåghäll Nivre, Dr Linda Hammarfelt, Prof Thomas Grub, Dr Florian Schmid, Birte Jensen, Dr Sophia Buck, Prof. Irena Samide, Prof Gudrun Heidemann and

Prof Kristýna Solomon. As is tradition at Movens conferences, there were also one-to-one Masterclasses for PhD students with experienced international academics in German Studies participating in the network. This is a great way for these students to broaden their network while also taking inspiration and learning from others in the field. The conference was concluded with an afternoon exploring German traces in the vicinity and the nearby twin towns of Killaloe/Ballina.



Movens outing Killaloe

The DAAD-supported conference has also been a starting point to build a network of researchers in Europe working on the history of German Studies and to draw lessons for the future of the field. This will inform our awareness of what is special about German Studies in Europe, contribute to the knowledge of the discipline in Germany and Europe and show unusual as well as converging developments at different points in time. It will include explorations of manifold topics such as particular curricula, women in academia, specific institutions, journals, research and teaching developments, transnational relations and inspiring individuals, anyone interested in joining please contact Gisela.Holfter@ul.ie.

CIGS Colloquium – 100 years Ardnacrusha & the Shannon Electricity Act

On 4 July, CIGS in collaboration with Siemens Ireland and the ESB held a one-day Colloquium commemorating 100 years since the passing of the Shannon Electricity Act on 4 July 1925 and the



Maire Ni Ghrada (UL), Prof Deirdre O'Loughlin (UL), Prof Kenneth Stanton (UL), Aiden Cawley (Siemens Ireland), Stefanie Ziska (CEO German-Irish Chamber of Industry & Commerce), Sean Hegarty (ESB), H.E. David Gill (German Ambassador), Prof Gisela Holfter (UL), John Moran (Mayor of Limerick), Simon Dauber (Allianz), Ciara McCaffrey (Director Glucksman Library), Minister of State Timmy Dooley, T.D., Prof Tom Cosgrove (UL), Dr Sorcha O'Brien (IADT), Professor Emeritus Joachim Fischer (UL), Jan Frohburg (UL)

inception of the Shannon hydro-electric power station. The day started in UL with the official opening by the Mayor of Limerick John Moran with further contributions by Minister of State Timmy Dooley, T.D.; Prof Kenneth Stanton (Dean of Science and Engineering, UL); H.E. David Gill (German Ambassador); Aiden Cawley (Siemens Ireland); Sean Hegarty (ESB) and Prof Gisela Holfter (CIGS, UL). After this, the day continued with a look at the significance of Ardnacrusha from an engineering, architectural and marketing perspective (with contributions from Prof Tom Cosgrove, Jan Frohburg and Prof Deirdre McLoughlin). This was followed by

a short break and more contributions looking at literary, artistic and cultural memories and repercussions (address by Emeritus Jean Monnet Chair Joachim Fischer, Dr Sorcha O'Brien and Associate Prof Maire Ni Ghrada). During the lunch break guests had the unique opportunity to access the exhibition on Ardnacrusha in UL's Special Collections with a welcome by Ciara McCaffrey (Director Glucksman Library) and an introduction by the Head of the Special Collection Ken Bergin. After the break a roundtable focused on the impact and legacy of Ardnacrusha, with speakers including H.E. David Gill (German Ambassador), Aiden Cawley (Siemens Ireland), Sean Hegarty (ESB), Stefanie Ziska (CEO German-Irish Chamber of Industry & Commerce) and Simon Dauber (COO Allianz Global Life). For the hands-on part of the day the group left for Ardnacrusha where a guided tour was provided. This added a firsthand experience and insights into the past and present working power plant discussed during the day. The many facets of this truly interdisciplinary (and booked-out) event led to enthusiastic feedback and plans are now underway to prepare a book publication to appear in 2026 in the Irish-German Studies series.



Angela Drescher, granddaughter of German engineer Paul Müller, who worked in Ireland 1926-1930, Ken Bergin, Special Collections



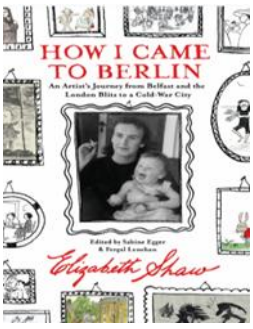
Prof Gisela Holfter, Mayor of Limerick John Moran, Minister of State Timmy Dooley

"Famous in East Germany, Unknown in Ireland?" Book Launch and Public Events in Dublin and Berlin on the Life and Work of Elizabeth Shaw



Apl. Prof Fergal Lenehan, Anne Schneider (E. Shaw's daughter), Associate Prof Sabine Egger

As part of "Elizabeth Shaw's Irish Berlin", a DAAD-funded research project, running from 2025-2026, led by PI Associate Prof Sabine Egger (MIC), with Co-PIs Apl. Prof Fergal Lenehan (University of Jena) and Assistant Prof. Aine McGillicuddy (DCU), the following events took place in 2025. Elizabeth Shaw's memoir, *How I Came to Berlin: An Artist's Journey from Belfast and the London Blitz to a Cold-War City*, was published in English for the first time. Richly illustrated with original drawings by Shaw, edited by Sabine Egger & Fergal Lenehan, Lilliput Press launched the book on 17 September at Books Upstairs, Dublin, for a wider English-speaking readership within and outside the island of Ireland. Elizabeth Shaw (1920-1992) was a Belfast-born artist who became one of the most popular children's book authors and illustrators in East Germany. In her works, which are among the classics of German children's literature, she brought a sense of Irishness and innovative creative ideas to post-WWII Berlin, informed by her experience of Ireland and of 1940s cosmopolitan London.



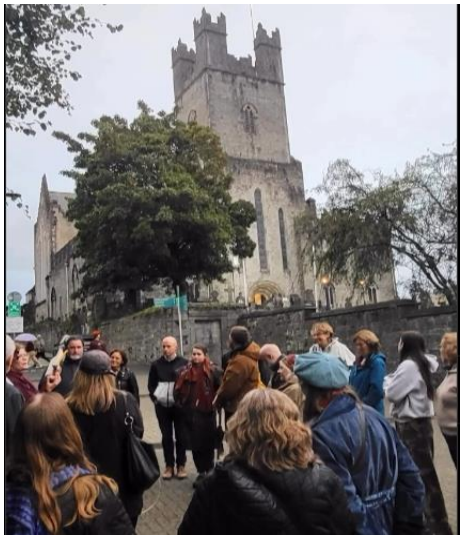
On 21 November, the editors, Sabine Egger and Fergal Lenehan, were invited by the Embassy of Ireland, Berlin, to present a public evening lecture on Elizabeth Shaw. The sold-out lecture concluded this

year's Berlin Irish Studies Conference hosted by the Embassy. We were delighted to be joined by Elizabeth Shaw's daughter and her son on the evening. The third major public event, in Dublin on 4 December, included a keynote by Prof Emer O'Sullivan (Leuphana University, Lüneburg) – following introductions by the German Ambassador, David Gill, and the director of the Goethe Institute, Noemi Njangiru – and a panel of writers and illustrators. The event was co-hosted by the German Embassy and the Goethe Institute Ireland. Four contemporary Irish children's authors /illustrators and laureates reflected on Shaw's life and oeuvre: PJ Lynch, Siobhán Parkinson, Margaret Anne Suggs and Emer O'Sullivan. It was fascinating to hear their opinions on Shaw's work in the context of today's multicultural and multilingual Ireland, as well as Irish and international book markets. We were delighted to be joined again by Shaw's daughter Anne Schneider, and other family members who had travelled from England, Northern Ireland and Germany, and are looking forward to sharing impressions through audio and visual media in the new year. The next project steps in 2026 will include an international conference, focusing on Irish autobiographies, and the development of teaching resources for Irish primary schools. Find more on the project at https://www.mic.ul.ie/Elizabeth-Shaws-Irish-Berlin.



left to right: Noemie Njanguru; Dr Aine McGillicuddy; Prof. Dr. Emer O'Sullivan; Andreas Strauchmann; Anne Schneider; H.E. David Gill; Dr Sabine Egger; Margaret Anne Suggs; Siobhan Parkinson; P. J. Lynch

Culture Night - A Guided Walk through Limerick in the Footsteps of Heinrich Böll



On September 19th, as part of this year's Culture Night celebrations, CIGS hosted a literary journey through Limerick tracing the footsteps of Nobel Prize-winning author Heinrich Böll. The tour entitled "A Guided Walk through Limerick in the Footsteps of Heinrich Böll", was led by Centre members Dr Hermann Rasche (University of Galway), Julia Weiß (DAAD Lektorin, University of Limerick), and Ciaran Kelly (University of Limerick). Starting at the Potato Market, the participants followed a route that passed St. Mary's Cathedral, King John's Castle, and the Treaty Stone, before crossing the River Shannon and concluding at Arthur's Quay. Along the way, excerpts from Böll's *Irish Journal* (*Irisches Tagebuch*) were shared, allowing participants to step back into Limerick's rich cultural tapestry and discover places that inspired Böll during his time in Ireland, through his vivid and observant prose. Despite the customary Irish grey skies, the turnout was excellent, and the walk inspired lively discussions among participants, reflecting on Böll's insights into Irish culture and identity. Even long-time residents of Limerick were impressed by how Böll had captured the atmosphere and spirit of the city.

Limericker Literaturgespräche – Gabrielle Alioth and Diarmuid Johnson

On 13 November, we hosted the final *Limericker Literaturgespräche* of the year. For this special event, CIGS celebrated the Swiss- Irish

connection through St Gall with readings by both Gabrielle Alioth and Diarmuid Johnson.

Gabrielle Alioth, a Swiss author living in Ireland, read from her book *Gallus, der Fremde*. Throughout her reading, Gabrielle took time to explain her thinking and writing process and explained how her own personal journey and experience was helping her to relate to Gallus and his story. Diarmuid Johnson was born in Wales but grew up in Galway. He now lives and works in continental Europe, although much of his writing is still influenced by his early childhood languages. His book on St. Gallus, *Ceallach* was originally published in the Irish language. He read from the recently published German translation, and concluded with a short excerpt from the original. The afternoon was made all the more special by the support of students from the Irish World Academy of Music and Dance who performed medieval chants to accompany the readings. The audience was transported back in time to the churches of St. Gall through the use of special sound effects and the spatial echoes of a medieval church. The event was opened by FAHSS Dean Dr Sandra Joyce, expertly organised by Dr Anita Barmettler and supported by the IWAMD and the Swiss Embassy. Special thanks to Pattie Punch!



Diarmuid Johnson, Gabrielle Alioth



Students from the Irish World Academy of Music and Dance performing medieval chants.

Towards 250 Years of Modern Languages at Third Level

The third event in the "Towards 250 Years of Modern Languages at Third Level" series took place in Limerick on Friday, 28 November. The event was co-organised by UL's Prof Gisela Holfter and Associate Prof Sabine Egger from MIC. It was a busy day with the morning hosted by MIC and then lunch and the afternoon sessions taking place in UL. It started with a warm welcome by MIC's Vice-President of Academic Affairs Prof Niamh Hourigan and the organisers. The morning then featured a fantastic keynote by Michael Cronin, Professor of French (1776) in TCD, followed by a panel on "Multilingualism and Modern Languages in Irish Schools". This panel was chaired by Karen Ruddock (PPLI, Director) and featured insightful contributions by Tanya Flanagan, Dr Francesca La Morgia, Dr Deirdre Kirwan and Prof Jenny Bruen. During the break, the poster session gave an opportunity to colleagues, students and retired colleagues from all over Ireland to showcase their research projects on languages (which included our own "Resources-for-German" project). It was great to see the breath and depth of research going on in language studies across the country. After a transfer by bus to UL the guests enjoyed a quick lunch before two afternoon panels on "Promoting Languages in Ireland and Experiences and Aspirations with Pluralism and Multilingualism", and "Ireland's Need for Language Graduates in Europe and Beyond". Panelists included Noémie Njangiru, Sonia Izquierdo, Prof em. Máirin Nic Eoin, Prof em. Phyllis Gaffney, Morag Neath and Dublin-based ambassadors H.E. Melitta Schubert (Austria), H.E. Jenny Piaget (Switzerland), H.E. Nicolas Nihon (Belgium), and Morag Neath (Interpretation, EU Commission).

These sessions were chaired by Prof Janice Carruthers (QUB) and Emer O'Connell (Director, EU-UK & Benelux Unit, Dept of Foreign Relations and Trade). The whole event was enabled by the Centre for Irish-German Studies 2025-2027 research project funded by the DAAD, supported by the RIA and of course the Advisory Group of the "Towards 250 Years" / #languages250 project. It was great to hear so many ideas on how to promote languages in Ireland while also identifying current challenges and particularly timely in the context of the current Language Strategy of the Government, Languages Connect (2017-2026) coming to its end next year. A compilation of the posters for the RIA website connected with #languages250 project (https://www.ria.ie/2025/03/04/towards-250-years-of-modern-languages/) will be available in spring 2026.



Prof em. Phyllis Gaffney, Prof Jürgen Barkhoff (TCD), H.E. Jenny Piaget (Swiss Ambassador), H.E. Melitta Schubert (Austrian Ambassador), Prof Michael Cronin (TCD), Tanya Flanagan (Head of Modern Languages Dept, ST Farnan's PPS & former Coordinator MLPSI);
Prof Janice Carruthers (QUB), Emer O'Connell (Director, EU-UK & Benelux Unit, Dept of Foreign Relations and Trade), Prof Liam Murray (UK), Associate Prof Sabine Egger (MIC), Prof Gisela Holfter (UL), Prof em. Máirín Nic Eoin (St Patrick's College/DCU), Morag Neath (Head of English and Irish Interpretation Unit at the EU Commission), Sonia Izquierdo (Head of Studies, Instituto Cervantes Dublin)

Christmas Reception



This year's Christmas reception was once again hosted in Plassey House. Against the beautiful old worldly Georgian backdrop of the venue, members and friends of the Centre for Irish-German Studies gathered to enjoy some Christmas treats. After a look back on the many activities and events the Centre was involved in over the past year, the Christmas spirit could truly be felt during some carol singing with musical support by our own Anita Barmettler. After the singing, St Nikolaus and his helper Knecht Ruprecht made a special visit, delighting the crowd with beautifully written verses and bringing a successful and festive afternoon to a close.

"Interdisciplinary Approaches to British and Irish Studies"



Prof Paul Carmichael, deputy ambassador Kieran Drake, Prof Gesa Stedman (Humboldt-University, Berlin), H.E. Maeve Collins (Irish ambassador), Prof Gisela Holfter (UL).

The last event of the year took place not in Limerick but in Berlin, on 15 December at the Centre for British Studies at the Humboldt-Universität Berlin as well as online. Entitled "Interdisciplinary Approaches to British and Irish Studies" the Irish ambassador to Germany, H.E. Maeve Collins,

British deputy ambassador Kieran Drake (who replaced British ambassador H.E. Andrew Mitchell at short notice due to British premier Keir Starmer being in Berlin), Prof Paul Carmichael and Prof Gisela Holfter discussed the current state and recent developments of relations between Ireland, the UK and Germany and approaches to academic engagements with this topic.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Austrian-Irish Essay Competition

Next year's annual German Language Essay competition of the Irish-Austrian Society has an added 'Special Competition' sponsored by the Centre for Irish-German Studies due to the upcoming 60th anniversary of the establishment of the Austrian embassy in Ireland. 5th year students are invited to engage with the essay title "Die vielseitigen Beziehungen zwischen Irland und Österreich". Entries here can be presented in multiple forms, including PowerPoint, drawings or graphs, but sources have to be listed and there should be a paragraph explaining why the selected topic was chosen (1st prize: 300 euro, 2nd prize 100 euro and books for runners up). Entries must be submitted by **4 March 2026**. For further information please see the attached link: 2026 German Language Essay Competition is now open

On 13-14 March, we will host a **CIGS network meeting** with DAAD London director Andreas Hoeschen, the German Embassy, the German-Irish Chamber of Commerce, the Austrian ambassador H.E. Melitta Schubert and the DAAD and OeAD *Lektoren* and Teaching Assistants to support inter-institutional collaboration and planning the 30th anniversary of the Centre in 2027.

We are delighted to announce our **2026 CIGS Video Competition** for final year students of German at Irish third level institutions! The annual CIGS "Irish-German Video Competition" has taken place since 2022. There are some changes this time. We are moving from an online and then hybrid event to an **in-person event on 30 April 2026** (which will be taking place with the Unternehmen Deutsch competition at the Goethe Institut). We are looking forward to receiving videos on any facets of Irish-German relations, past and present, created by 2 students per group with a max. length of 4 minutes (longer videos will not be accepted). Criteria include creativity, a research dimension, sound quality and overall presentation. The **deadline for the videos is 11 April 2026**. Each third level institution can nominate two group videos and one reserve video. Should there be more videos from any university, our wonderful DAAD *Lektoren* and Teaching Assistants have kindly agreed to be involved in the selection process. The selected videos should be sent to marah.moloneyweissbrich@ul.ie.

On 11-12 May 2026 there will be an international conference co-organised with the Centre for British Studies at the Humboldt-Universität Berlin, following on four successful conferences in Ireland (two in Limerick and two in Belfast) organised by Prof Gisela Holfter and Prof Paul Carmichael between 2021 and 2024. Supported by the DAAD, we are now going abroad for an HU – UL – UU conference on **"Evolving Relationships – Ireland, the UK and beyond"**. A draft programme will be available on the CIGS website by the end of February 2026.

Plans are also underway for more Limericker Literaturgespräche and lectures throughout the year as well as hosting the Goethe

Institut Roadshow in October – keep an eye out under upcoming events on our website.