



Symposium Report and Proposed Outcomes

THE IRISH SEA

History, Culture, Environment

19-20 September 2014

A Symposium at the National Maritime Museum of Ireland, Dun Laoghaire



Co-organised by

John Brannigan (UCD School of English, Drama and Film)

Tasman Crowe (UCD School of Biology and Environmental Science)

Richard McCormick (National Maritime Museum of Ireland)



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1. The Irish Sea Symposium

An interdisciplinary symposium on 'The Irish Sea: History, Culture, Environment' was held in the National Maritime Museum of Ireland www.mariner.ie which is housed in the historic 177-year-old Mariners' Church, Dun Laoghaire, on 19-20 September 2014. The primary purpose of the symposium was to bring together researchers from the marine and maritime sciences, humanities, and heritage to address the question, 'What does the Irish Sea contribute to the lives of the people who inhabit its shores?', and to identify opportunities for future interdisciplinary research on the Irish Sea.

The symposium was co-organised by Professor John Brannigan of UCD School of English, Drama and Film, Dr Tasman Crowe of UCD School of Biology and Environmental Science, and Richard McCormick, Director of Library and Archives of the National Maritime Museum, and it was co-sponsored by UCD Earth Institute, UCD Humanities Institute, the National Maritime Museum of Ireland, and the Atlantic Archipelagos Research Consortium. The venue replete with its historic maritime artefacts provided an excellent context for discussions about maritime research, and the museum volunteers ensured that symposium participants were warmly welcomed to the museum, well fed and refreshed with tea, coffee, soup and sandwiches, and furnished with all necessary equipment. The symposium sponsors provided funding for the travel and accommodation of speakers, the catering and publicity for the event, and the recording of all symposium sessions for web podcasts. The museum also organised and screened a continuous loop presentation of 248 slides supplied by 63 interested researchers and institutions. A website was also developed (www.irishseasyposium.com) to promote the symposium, and which included an online registration facility.



A packed house in the Mariner's Church for the Public Lecture by Richard Nairn on Friday 19 September 2014. Photograph ©Margaret Brown

The programme included a free public lecture on Friday 19 September delivered by Richard Nairn, of Natura Environmental Consultants, and author of *Ireland's Coastline: Exploring its Nature and Heritage*. The title of the lecture was 'Nature of the Irish Sea Coast', and it was attended by 125 people. The symposium continued on Saturday 20 September with three panels of research papers and a workshop session inviting all participants to share ideas. Each panel of research papers consisted of speakers from the maritime sciences, humanities and heritage. The full programme is appended to this report. The aim of the panels was to stimulate debate about research directions, problems, and opportunities. The aim of the workshop was to generate ideas about what areas of research might form the focus for future research collaborations between the marine and maritime sciences, humanities, and heritage. The panels and workshop were attended by 65 people.

The symposium generated significant publicity in local and national media. It was previewed in *The Irish Times* by Lorna Siggins and by Marcus Connaughton on RTE's *Seascapes*, and covered extensively by the marine journalist, Tom MacSweeney, who recorded interviews with several participants for his 'Ireland, an Island Nation' local radio programme and highlighted the event on his blog on the Afloat magazine website. It was also mentioned on numerous maritime websites, the *Marine Times* and other newspapers, and local photographer, Margaret Brown, ensured positive local media coverage of the event. The podcasts of the symposium proceedings were recorded by Mike Liffey from UCD and will serve as an excellent tool to promote the development of further research projects on marine and

maritime sciences, humanities, and heritage. The podcasts are hosted on the UCD Humanities website:

<http://www.ucd.ie/humanities/events/podcasts/2014/irish-sea-symposium-history-culture-environment/>

2. Why The Irish Sea?

The Irish Sea was the focus of the symposium both as a distinctive sea space with its own particular environmental, cultural, and historical characteristics, and as a rich case study for interdisciplinary maritime research which might have significant broader implications. With an estimated population of 15 million around its coastal rim, and a combined GDP of €500 billion, the Irish Sea forms a sizeable and significant region. It is almost enclosed by the landmasses of Britain and Ireland, with relatively narrow 'gateways' at its northern and southern boundaries with the Atlantic Ocean and the Celtic Sea, and combines mountainous terrain at its northern and southern coasts around Antrim, Ayrshire, Wicklow and Snowdonia, with flat, sandy and salt marsh shores around its 'middle' coasts along Solway, Morecambe, Dundalk and Dublin. These features make for a distinctive and varied ecosystem. It has been said to form a 'natural centre' for the regions which surround it, and is the only part of the 'British Isles' to border its main constituent nations – England, Ireland, Northern Ireland, Scotland, Wales, as well as containing the Isle of Man. This natural location also makes it an interesting space for the cultural and political relations between these nations and communities.

The Irish Sea area combines a wide range of population densities, from major cities such as Dublin, Liverpool, and Belfast, with Manchester and Glasgow in proximate hinterlands, to sparsely populated rural areas in Cumbria, North Wales, and Galloway. It hosts a wide diversity of human activities and uses, including energy uses such as oil exploration, wind farms, nuclear plant, and tidal power, conservation and heritage activities such as bird sanctuaries, protected wetlands, public coastal walkways, and museums, leisure and tourist uses such as seaside resorts, national parks, water sports, and yachting, industrial activities in the past and present which include mining, shipbuilding, manufacturing, armaments, and food production, and some of these uses and activities have had significant and lasting effects on the environment and ecosystem, including the reputation of being the most radioactive sea in the world. It is also a key area for economic activity, including shipping, energy, mariculture, and fishing. Historically, it has been a key zone of labour migration and capital flow and has been described as the 'Irish Sea industrial zone', as 'the marine antechamber of Britain', and with its arc of ports and industrial hinterlands 'a "world" like Fernand Braudel's Mediterranean' (Harvie 2008, 8). It has also been identified by one recent commercial survey as 'of high importance to the future economic and environmental development of the surrounding cities and regions', with many current and planned schemes for maritime and coastal development (Maritime Management 2013, 19).



Image courtesy of the British Museum

3. Scientific Context

The principal scientific aim of the symposium was to identify how collaborative research between academics from the sciences and the humanities and heritage professionals and researchers might work towards addressing particular problems in studying the relationship between environment, culture, and history. The panels were organised to reflect on the very different uses and values which marine ecosystems support, and were broadly divided into addressing the three categories conventionally used in theories and practices of ecosystem services: **provisioning services** (e.g. food,

water, raw materials), **regulating or maintaining services** (e.g. air purification, climate regulation, genepool protection), and **cultural services** (e.g. aesthetic and spiritual experience, inspiration and information, information for cognitive development, recreation and tourism). While scientists have contributed to theories and practices of ecosystem services over the past three decades, and the concept of ecosystem services has evolved beyond its original academic use (as a pedagogical tool to raise awareness of biodiversity and ecological systems) to widespread deployment by government, commercial, and non- governmental organisations as an explanation of the economic values associated with ecosystems, there has been little or no engagement of the maritime humanities or



heritage sectors in this research. The premise of the symposium was that there were three areas of deficiency in theories and operationalisation of ecosystem services which may benefit from the contribution of humanities and heritage researchers. The first deficiency is that ecosystem assessments have not been able to address with any degree of adequacy or accuracy how to include full consideration of non-market cultural ecosystem values of marine environments (especially aesthetic, spiritual, and cultural values). The second deficiency is that ecosystem

assessments have tended to be limited to single-function, synchronous studies which have obviously not been able to address multiple and competing uses and perceptions of marine environments, and not been able to address how ecosystem values have changed historically in relation to changing environmental contexts. The third deficiency is the alienation of coastal fishing communities caused by a lack of meaningful dialogue and respect for their cultural heritage and unique way of life that has sustained such communities for centuries.

4. Cultural and Heritage Contexts

An important motivation for organising the symposium, and hosting it in the National Maritime Museum, was the strong desire of both academics and heritage professionals and researchers to raise the profile of maritime studies and maritime heritage generally. It was equally important to the academic and heritage sectors, and equally important to the sciences and the humanities, that the symposium consider the means not just of advancing knowledge and research, but also of raising a greater public consciousness of the historical, cultural, and ecological significance of marine environments. With its distinguished history as a port, Dun Laoghaire was a very appropriate location, and even more so, the Mariners' Church, home of the Maritime Museum and its many fine exhibits of Irish maritime heritage. In the context of the museum's own objectives for raising the profile of Ireland's maritime heritage, the symposium was able to build on the very obvious and tangible success of the museum's Maritime Heritage Gathering of 29-30 October 2013. It was also an important consideration that academic researchers participating in the symposium would be able to recognise the recent achievements of the museum in developing and preserving its library and archive collections, and consider how these collections, providing context to its many artefacts, might form a basis for further academic research.

5. Summary of Workshop Findings

The workshop organised participants into three groups. In the first phase of the workshop (30 minutes), participants were divided according to their self-identifications with maritime sciences, humanities or heritage, and were asked to discuss three questions: 1) What does the Irish Sea contribute to our lives?; 2) What conditions are required for the Irish Sea to maintain that contribution?; and 3) What can your group (i.e. sciences, humanities, or heritage) add to research and understanding of the Irish Sea and maritime environments more generally? In the second phase of the workshop (30 minutes), participants were re-organised into mixed and balanced groups of participants

from different disciplines and were asked to identify how and in what forms we might collaborate, and to recommend priority projects on which we could collaborate. In the final phase of the workshop (30 minutes), all groups were brought back together and the chairpersons of the workshop groups reported on the discussion and findings. A summary of workshop findings and recommendations is below.

The workshop groups found that the Irish Sea is associated with a wide range of values and attributes, both positive and negative, including climatological effects and its dynamic interaction with coastal lands, its influence on flora and fauna, its effects on our sense of identity, community and heritage, its provision of edible or usable produce, its cultural and spiritual benefits as a sea space, its effects upon health and well-being, its recreational uses, the threats posed by the sea to human lives and communities, its provision of resources for energy generation and exploitation, its role as a space for trading and transportation, its regulating role in cleaning our air and water, its use as a space for dumping pollutants, its inspirational functions in art, literature, and culture, and its wider inspirational functions as a space of 'nature' or wilderness, and its educational value as an ecosystem and maritime space.



The workshop groups also found that many of these values and attributes were dependent upon a number of key conditions, including maintaining a healthy ecosystem as the basis for its many functions, our ability and capacity to pass on key information, skills, and knowledge to future generations, the management of exploitation of resources to ensure sustainability, scientific research to ensure that all decisions regarding ecosystem management are well informed, building and retaining the adaptive capacity of the coastline, involvement of all stakeholders in ecosystem decision-making, good working connections between academic, government and volunteer sectors to ensure effective research and policy-making, and proactive and predictive research to prepare an adaptive capacity to deal with rising populations, increased pollution, and the effects of climate change.

These are the key findings of the workshop discussions.

- Understanding and managing the Irish Sea involves collaboration between all of its surrounding and constituent states, nations, and regions, and the academic and heritage sectors can play a key role in building the capacity for collaborative work on the principal issues affecting the Irish Sea area.
- It was recognised that any assessment of ecosystem uses and values needs to include consideration of cultural and heritage perspectives as well as scientific and economic perspectives. Issues such as fish stocks and wind farms involve questions of cultural taste and aesthetic value as well as questions of food and energy provision.
- The workshops recognised that research needs to have a strong local focus, as issues of environmental concern, cultural identity, and heritage have specific local characteristics and accents.
- It was also recognised that the maritime sciences, humanities and heritage were inter-related with coastal and maritime communities; that academic research can spur efforts to promote and preserve aspects of maritime heritage, for example, and maritime heritage projects can

drive and inspire community regeneration and focus the energy of traditional coastal communities towards becoming local 'custodians of the seas'.

- The unwillingness to seriously include maritime activities and history in the primary and secondary schools syllabus since the foundation of the Irish State, despite numerous recommendations to that effect, had perpetuated a remarkable lack of knowledge of maritime affairs, seriously detrimental to the economic, environmental and cultural value of the Irish sea and its contiguous zones.
- There was a strong emphasis on the need for more educational activities centred on maritime heritage and skills, at all levels of education, and in particular for activities which engaged school and university students in practical skills related to seafaring and wildlife as well as academic knowledge.
- The understated role of women in fisheries was highlighted during the Irish Sea symposium with the rather pointed comment that there appears to be little interest in researching this largely undiscovered topic. Women historically have been the backbone of maritime communities for centuries. Many have served with distinction at sea during wars and also in peacetime in the merchant service and the navies of the world. Yet research has been patchy at best and tending to focus on prominent heroic or unfortunate women who lost their lives at sea rather than the very significant social and economic contribution of women to maritime society at sea and ashore.
- There were concerns that the conditions for a more holistic approach to marine and maritime studies in Ireland were not favourable: marine and maritime affairs are fragmented across several Government departments, for example, and academic research on marine and maritime issues across the disciplines is patchy.
- A greater understanding of the sea as an organic system is in itself a key aim for marine and maritime sciences, humanities, and heritage, and experience of marine and maritime environments has a key role to play in all levels of research and education in promoting that understanding.
- Concerns were expressed that academic studies tied to short-term funding would not have lasting impact or sustainability, and the work of independent researchers may not be widely accessible or preserved for the next generation.
- Training in interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary methods between the sciences and the humanities is a key requirement for maritime studies in the future.
- More efforts are required to build and secure archives and libraries relevant to maritime studies in and around the Irish Sea area which will be vital to research, education, and public engagement during the current decade of historical commemorations.

6. Outcomes and Proposals

The symposium concluded with the recognition that the findings of the workshop discussions suggested some directions forward for collaboration on research and education between the marine and maritime sciences, humanities, and heritage, and including social sciences and women's studies. The following actions are proposed as outcomes from the workshop discussions:

- The workshops recognised that there was a clear need for the co-ordination of research on the Irish Sea across all relevant disciplines, all relevant sectors, and with an emphasis both on generating new research and promoting public engagement with existing research. **Action: Examine the possibility of establishing an ongoing project to co-ordinate research on the Irish Sea.**
- The workshops also recognised that there was a clear need for the co-ordination of research on Irish Maritime Studies more generally which should also involve maritime museums around the country. **Action: Dr Philip De Souza (UCD) proposed to establish an Irish Maritime Studies Group to co-ordinate academic research and education.**
- There was a clear recognition of the need for the sciences and humanities to collaborate at a general level on maritime studies, that the humanities might guide the reflective process about values and motivations for researching, understanding, and enhancing marine ecosystems, and that the sciences might guide the educational process about how to assess and manage ecosystem interactions, and that together they would better work towards visionary perspectives and predictive models of what kinds of environments and communities could exist co-dependently. It was agreed to examine further how such collaborations between marine and maritime sciences and the humanities could be developed at a theoretical level. **Action: Examine possibilities for research on theoretical developments from collaboration between marine and maritime sciences and humanities.**
- A strong recommendation from the workshop groups is that collaborative research projects involving marine and maritime sciences, humanities and heritage should be focused on case studies of specific processes or activities (such as fisheries, or wind farms) and of local environments. Successful projects of this kind can develop using comparative methodologies to have wider applicability. These projects would depend upon available research funding. **Action: Identify funding opportunities, viable proposals, and suitable researchers for collaborative research projects.**
- It was recognised that policy-makers and decision-makers needed to better utilise available research and consult all relevant stakeholders, and that the formal means of all stakeholders participating in informed decision-making needed a proper framework. **Action: Explore how a co-ordinating body concerned with research about the Irish Sea might seek to establish or promote such a framework.**
- One key area identified for collaboration between the marine and maritime sciences, humanities, and heritage is to foster and develop educational resources about marine and maritime studies which could be used at various levels of educational curricula in schools and



universities. This would help to promote greater awareness, knowledge, and care of marine and maritime environments, culture, and heritage. **Action: Examine the means of developing educational resources which would draw from both academic and heritage sectors.**

- A topic deserving far more attention, and combining researchers from the scientific, humanities and heritage disciplines as well as the social sciences and women's studies fields, is the understated though very significant social, economic, cultural and scientific contribution of women to maritime society, at sea and ashore, in the Irish Sea and elsewhere. **Action: The scientific, humanities and heritage disciplines should explore the potential for interdisciplinary research focused on the social and economic contribution of women to maritime society at sea and ashore in conjunction with researchers specialising in social sciences and women's studies around the periphery of the Irish Sea and beyond.**
- A strong emphasis was placed in the workshop discussions on engaging with coastal communities, and working in partnership with coastal community groups and maritime interests of all kinds (environmental, commercial, heritage, educational, recreational, administrative, etc). **Action: All of the above actions to include the brief to explore and enable local partnerships with coastal and maritime community groups.**
- There is a clear need for all research and education activities involved in Irish Sea studies to offer good and well-maintained web profiles and web resources, which will help to promote and develop work on the Irish Sea further. **Action: All of the above actions to include provision of web dissemination.**
- The Irish Sea Symposium concept should be expanded to include the western Atlantic coastal arc of the European Union in the first instance, subsequently expanding to include a symposium involving the nations surrounding the North Atlantic Ocean. **Action: The potential for EU Sea for Society or similar support as well as EU Trans-Atlantic EU – USA & Canada and other funding should be explored.**



Howth Trawler MFV Green Isle on BIM (Irish Sea Fisheries Board) /Marine Institute Technical Conservation Square Mesh Trials in the Irish Sea

Friday 19 September:

- 7pm Welcome Addresses by Richard McCormick, Director of Library and Archives, National Maritime Museum of Ireland, and Tasman Crowe, UCD School of Biology and Environmental Science
[Richard Nairn \(Natura Environmental Consultants\)](#)
 NATURE OF THE IRISH SEA COAST

Saturday 20 September:

- 9.00am Symposium Registration
 9.30am Welcome Addresses by Peadar Ward, President of the National Maritime Museum of Ireland, and by Tasman Crowe and John Brannigan, University College Dublin

9.50am **Panel One: The Material Uses and Histories of the Irish Sea (Chair: Richard McCormick)**

This panel will address past and current material benefits of the Irish Sea to the communities around its shores, in terms of fishing, shipping, smuggling, and other kinds of economic activity.

[Jim MacLaughlin \(Political Geographer and Author\)](#)

THE IRISH SEA AND THE ATLANTIC SEABOARD IN HISTORICAL CONTEXT: A TALE OF TWO SEAS

[Maighread Ni Mhurchadha \(Independent Researcher\)](#), read by [Joe Varley](#)

THE IRISH REVENUE BOATMEN, 1684-1765

[Michael Keatinge \(Bord Iascaigh Mhara\)](#)

THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL VALUE OF FISHERIES IN THE IRISH SEA

11.10am Tea/Coffee

11.30am **Panel Two: The Natures and Histories of the Irish Sea (Chair: Tasman Crowe)**

This panel will discuss research on the natural characteristics of the Irish Sea, on the histories and impacts of human activities on its shores and seabed, and on the relationship between nature and culture.

[Andrew Gibson \(Royal Holloway, University of London\)](#)

'HOPE IS A GEOLOGICAL GRACE': HISTORY AND GEOLOGY IN NORMAN NICHOLSON'S POETRY OF THE CUMBRIAN COAST, 1948-1954

[Jan Hiddink \(Bangor University\)](#)

THE EFFECT OF FISHERIES AND OTHER STRESSORS ON THE SEA-BED ECOSYSTEM IN THE IRISH SEA

[David Brett \(Independent Researcher\)](#)

THE IRISH SEA: HISTORY WITHOUT NATIONS

[Ian Lawler \(Bord Iascaigh Mhara\)](#)

THE IRISH SEA THROUGH COMMERCE & WAR – A WINDOW ON HISTORY AND TECHNOLOGY

1.10pm Lunch

2.00pm **Panel Three: The Cultural Meanings and Values of the Irish Sea (Chair: John Brannigan)**

This panel will focus on what values and meanings we place on the Irish Sea, how we have represented and imagined it in the past, and on how we think about the sea as a place.

[John Mack \(University of East Anglia\)](#)

'FROGS AROUND A POND'? THE IRISH SEA AS LOCAL AND AS GLOBAL

[Cormac Lowth \(Independent Researcher\)](#)

MARITIME ART FROM THE PRE-PHOTOGRAPHIC ERA

[Marcus Collier \(University College Dublin\)](#)

MARINE CULTURAL ECOSYSTEM SERVICES

3.15pm Tea/Coffee

3.30pm **Workshop: Future Possibilities for Research (Chair: Richard McCormick)**

In three workshop sessions, the participants will be invited to discuss the possibilities for future research which brings together the sciences and the humanities to enhance our understanding of the Irish Sea and its economic and cultural benefits to society.

5.30pm Outcomes and Closing Remarks

7.30pm Symposium Dinner: National Yacht Club, Dun Laoghaire (€30 payable on registration at the Museum)

As a distinctive and innovative event which brought together several academic disciplines, and brought together the academic and voluntary heritage sectors, the Irish Sea Symposium generated considerable interest from local and national media. Several journalists and photographers attended the symposium, and reports about the research presented at the symposium appeared in *The Irish Times*, RTE 'Seascapes', *The Marine Times*, the popular maritime website, Afloat.ie, as well as local newspapers such as the *Dun Laoghaire Gazette* and the *Southside People*.

Marine journalist, Tom MacSweeney, gave extensive coverage of the symposium on his popular radio programme, *This Island Nation*, which is available to download as a podcast: <http://marinetimes.ie/> and also on CRY104FM: <http://www.mixcloud.com/CRY104FM/>

Coverage focused on several key areas of the symposium, including the lack of awareness of Ireland's maritime heritage, discussion of ecological diversity and the scientific and political challenges of managing the Irish Sea, and cultural and historical research on sea workers, ports, and coastal communities.

Featured here are some examples of the publicity generated before and after the symposium.

SEPTEMBER 2014 | MARINE TIMES NEWSPAPER

Examining the Irish Sea

Its History, Culture and Environment

By Richard Mc Cormick, Director Library & Archive
National Maritime Museum of Ireland

Richard McCormick, formerly of Bord Iascaigh Mhara, has been carrying out extensive work on re-instating the library and archive at the National Maritime Museum in Dun Laoghaire which has a collection of 5,000 books and archival material collected in over 73 years. This project, with the support of Dun Laoghaire Rathdown County Council and the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, follows extensive renovations carried out to the Mariners' Church at Dun Laoghaire in which the Museum is based. He writes here about a major symposium on the Irish Sea to be held jointly by the Museum and University College, Dublin.

The National Maritime Museum in Dun Laoghaire and UCD have a very positive and mutually beneficial relationship which started with six Library & Information Studies' students assisting the Museum's volunteers to reinstate the Museum's extensive Library and Archive during the 2012/2013 academic year as part of their Masters' Degree.

The relationship continued in 2014 when Professor John Brannigan, Senior Lecturer in UCD's School of English, Drama and Film approached the Maritime Museum to ascertain how the Museum's artefacts and 5,000 volume library might help his students

deepen their understanding of Irish maritime history and culture. Professor Brannigan, the Editor of *Irish University Review*, had noted a key recommendation in the Maritime Heritage Gathering Report 2013 that the "extremely low level of Irish maritime heritage research should be rectified" and had just developed a new final year module on 'Literature, Modernity and the Sea' and a Masters' Level module on 'Modernism and the Sea' for the 2014/2015 academic year.

When UCD's Earth Institute, UCD's Humanities Institute and the Atlantic Archipelagos Research Consortium agreed to sponsor an Irish Sea symposium in the Maritime Museum, Professor Brannigan teamed up with Dr Tasman Crowe from UCD's School of Biology & Environmental Science and myself to organise this event. The symposium is unusual in that it is designed to bring together sciences and humanities academics, public officials and independent researchers from around the periphery of the Irish Sea to present their research findings and discuss the values, meanings and histories of

the Irish Sea which Ireland shares with England, Wales, the Isle of Man and Scotland.

Eleven speakers will cover topics as diverse as the Irish Sea's underwater heritage, its fisheries, marine biology, coastline and seabed mapping, in addition to its rich maritime art, history, poetry and literature as well as the prolific smuggling industry that once thrived in North County Dublin. This eclectic mix of interests is designed to stimulate debate about the Irish Sea and will conclude with workshop sessions to ascertain how the various constituencies might collaborate together in a large interdisciplinary research project. The speakers'



presentations will also be recorded for a worldwide audience on UCD's Scholarcast Series and, should this event prove successful, consideration will be given to expanding the geographical range in future years.

The Symposium begins with a free public lecture in the Maritime Museum on 'The Nature of the Irish Sea Coast' on Friday September 19 at 7 pm by Richard Nairn, with the Museum being open to the public prior to that as part of Dun Laoghaire Rathdown County Council's Cultural Night celebrations. Entry to the Symposium on Saturday, September 20, will cost €10 for the day, payable on registration at the Museum. There will also be an optional €30 dinner for participants in the National Yacht Club, Dun Laoghaire on Saturday night also payable at registration. For information on the Symposium and to register for the event visit <http://irish-seasymposium.com/> as well over half the available places were already booked by the end of August.

Stop seeing Irish Sea as 'barrier', says Brannigan

LORNA SIGGINS

For far too long, the waterway between these islands has been viewed more as a "barrier" than as a "shared space", Prof John Brannigan of UCD's school of English, drama and film says.

James Joyce dismissed it as "snotgreen" and "scrotumtightening" in *Ulysses*, while a historian described it as the "British Mediterranean". However, Scotland's referendum offers opportunities for a more positive attitude towards the Irish Sea, Prof Brannigan has said.

The academic, who is joint or-

ganiser of a symposium on the subject later this week, says it is time for collaboration between the sciences and the humanities to enhance understanding of the Irish Sea's economic and cultural benefits.

"Whatever the outcome of the Scottish referendum, the debate has focused attention on questions of sovereignty and on the geographical relationship between these islands," he says.

"Scotland's first minister Alex Salmond has been gesturing towards brand new models of government, and our common sea could and should be a

part of that approach," he says.

Prof Brannigan is part of the Atlantic Archipelagos Research Consortium, which is hosting a symposium with UCD in the National Maritime Museum, Dún Laoghaire, Co Dublin.

Its aim is to unite scientists, the humanities and maritime heritage experts, and to devise ways of collaborating on an extensive interdisciplinary research project, he says.

irishseasymposium.com

→ Scottish referendum news and analysis: page 8

2 October 2014 DUN LAOGHAIRE GAZETTE 3



Maritime Museum: Sea symposium makes waves in Dun Laoghaire

MARINE broadcaster Tom MacSweeney, journalist Richard McCormick and Professor John Brannigan, director of library and archives at the National Maritime Museum of Ireland were among those at a public symposium on the Irish Sea. The recent event was organised by University College Dublin and the National Maritime Museum in Dun Laoghaire to address research questions about the sea that the island of Ireland shares with Wales, the Isle of Man, England and Scotland. The symposium brought together speakers from sciences, humanities and maritime heritage to discuss what contribution the sea makes to our island. Picture: Margaret Brown

WORKS

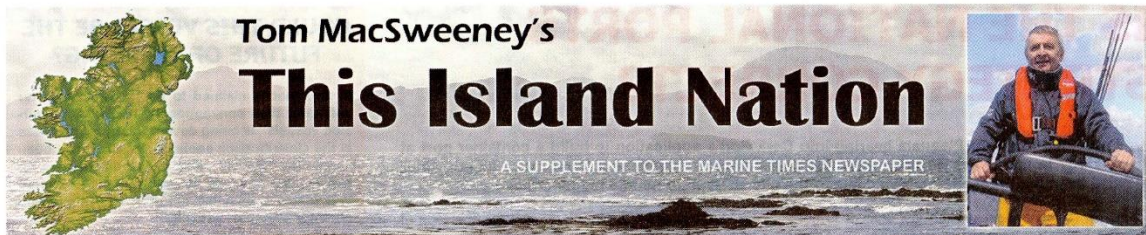
Proposed closure of road

■ BAIRBRE NI BHRAONAIN

THE temporary closure of George's Place to through traffic of the section of George's Place (road) from Bentley Villas to Kelly's Avenue, from October 17 to 19, has been proposed by nearby Shannon Homes to facilitate the dismantling of a tower crane.

A traffic management plan will be in operation for the proposed closure. Diversion routes will be along George's Street Lower, Clarence Street, Crofton Road, Kelly's Avenue and Crofton Avenue.

Interested parties may lodge an objection in writing to the Senior Engineer, Traffic Section in County Hall by Monday, October 6.



EXPANDING THIS ISLAND NATION THROUGH COMMUNITY RADIO

THIS ISLAND NATION radio programme is increasing transmission from monthly to fortnightly from Monday, October 6, at 6.30 p.m.

Every week 2,000 radio volunteers around the country engage with 307,000 listeners, broadcasting from 22 fully-licensed stations, in addition to which there are a number of stations at different stages of development.

This is the strength of Community Radio, a rapidly-growing broadcasting sector and a force for community development, identity and expression.

On the banks of the River Blackwater in the town of Youghal on the East Cork coastline, a town with a great maritime tradition, THIS ISLAND NATION is produced, a maritime programme for a maritime people, at the studios of Community Radio Youghal, cry104fm.

As well as being available on transmission to its area of Counties Cork and Waterford, THIS ISLAND NATION is available nationwide and worldwide, through the Internet at www.cry104fm, on live transmission or by Podcast.

NEAR FM 90.3 Community Radio for Dublin North East and RAIDÍO CORCA BAISINN 94.8 FM in County Clare also broadcast THIS ISLAND NATION and it is also available on the Marine Times website www.marinetimes.ie

I am hopeful that more community stations around the country will join in broadcasting the programme and providing local reportage in-put, widening the family of the sea circle.

CRAOL is the national representative body for the community radio movement.

A community radio station is not focussed solely on broadcast schedules or commercial interest. So it has a stronger focus on the values and interests of the community to which it broadcasts and can provide a wider variety of broadcasting.

It can offer what is missing from mainstream media - the newspapers, radio and television - and that is a regular forum for maritime news, information, comment and opinion, related directly to communities. The mainstream media, with a few exceptions, does not give sufficient regular, informed, balanced coverage of the marine sphere.

Transmission of THIS ISLAND NATION as a monthly radio programme about the sea, with the well-known signature tune, 'Sailing By,' began earlier this year and interest has grown. 'Sailing By' was dropped by RTE as the signature tune for the programme 'Seascapes' which I had developed and broadcast there for over 20 years. It is back on air also, as the theme tune of THIS ISLAND NATION.

YOU CAN TUNE IN EASILY

With modern technology it is quite easy to listen to radio stations broadcasting from anywhere around the country. The app TUNE IN RADIO which can be downloaded from Google (Play Store) is great for listening to radio anywhere. Download it and you have access to all radio stations on smartphones, tablets, laptops and desktops. That includes, of course, those which broadcast THIS ISLAND NATION.

Women Have Been Badly Treated In The Fishing Industry

The "History, Culture and Environment" of the Irish Sea might not appear a topic of the widest interest but, held at the National Maritime Museum in Dun Laoghaire, organised jointly with University College Dublin as a response to the low level of Irish maritime heritage research, it proved to be lively, informative and came up with some good ideas.

Two of the many issues raised fascinated me - Why is it that women have been written out of the history of the Irish fishing industry and why not use smugglers for economic benefits to coastal regions?

Jim McLaughlin, a political geographer and social scientist, who has lectured at UCC for over 25 years, raised the question of why women have been written out of the history of the Irish fishing industry. The women of the Claddagh in Galway were so powerful physically, he told me, that they often met their men at the boats when they came back from fishing and carried the men ashore on their backs and, having set them ashore to rest, they then set prices for the fish, as well as cleaning and selling them. They were big, powerful women, the Claddagh women, like other women you can see in old photographs of fishing ports,

with fish piled up on the pier, the women cutting and filleting them, the men in black suits who were the merchants looking on, ready to buy the fish.

"Generally, women who cleaned and filleted the fish catches were disregarded by the general populace as lower-class because they were doing a tough, dirty job, blood and guts around the place and they were considered a bit wild."

So is that where the 'fishwife,' often used as a derogatory term came from?

"They were women working in a man's world and so considered of dubious background and quality. They were crossing barriers."

They were treated badly and their story should be told, but it would be a huge job of research work and I don't see too many people rushing to do it. Women have been badly treated in the history of the fishing industry."



Rush for Smugglers



Then there is the smuggling history. Smugglers were liked in the harbour at Rush in North County Dublin, so much that in the 1800s the Revenue could only get one man to remain in the village for any length of time before he was chased out. But why, Joe Varley of the National Maritime Institute asked, when presenting research done by Maighread Ní Murchadha about the Irish Revenue Boatmen from 1684-1766, do we Irish not make more from the opportunities which history about smugglers makes available?

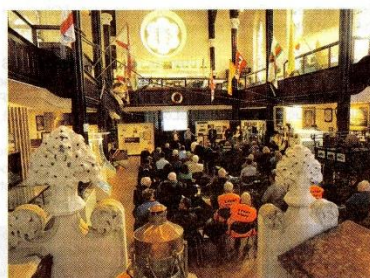
"Go to Devon and Cornwall where there is every escapade, whether real or made up, about smugglers. There are Smugglers' Coves, Smugglers' Inns, festivals about smuggling and they all attract people, so there is commercial potential. Why are smugglers' traditions not similarly used in Ireland?"

"They loved their smugglers in Rush, for example. There were seven Revenue men in Skerries, seven in Portrane, eight or nine down in Malahide, all around the same area, in the 18th and early 19th centuries, which was the golden age of smuggling, but always just one brave soul in Rush and he wasn't very welcome!"

In the 18th century Rush was regarded as a "Smugglers' nest." One of the most well-known smugglers from there was Luke Ryan, born in 1750. He emigrated to France and obtained a commission as a Lieutenant in Dillon's Irish Regiment. Returning to Rush, he began operating as a smuggler between Ireland and France. From 1775 until 1783 France sympathised with the Americans during the War of Independence and the French government commissioned him commander of a privateer, The Black Prince, which plundered English ships. English forces captured Ryan in 1782. Ordered to

the gallows four times, he was reprieved on each occasion. At the conclusion of the war, the French secured his release, but his nest egg, some £70,000, a lot of money at the time, amassed from smuggling and privateering, was appropriated by French bankers. He died in a debtors' prison in 1789, jailed for owing £200.

Another Rush smuggler was Jack Connor, a native of Wexford, operating from 'The Smugglers' Cave,' between Loughshinney and Skerries. Described as "romantic and swashbuckling" it was believed his cave held rich treasures but has never been located!



No Studying of Marine History

Professor John Brannigan of UCD's School of English, Drama and Film, one of the organisers of the symposium was surprised that, as Ireland has "such a wonderful maritime heritage, we have no developed sense of studying that history"

"I am curious why that is the situation when people like to live by the sea, there is a clear value commercially from the sea, which is all very important to an island community which we are in Ireland, so there is a vast amount of research work to be done."



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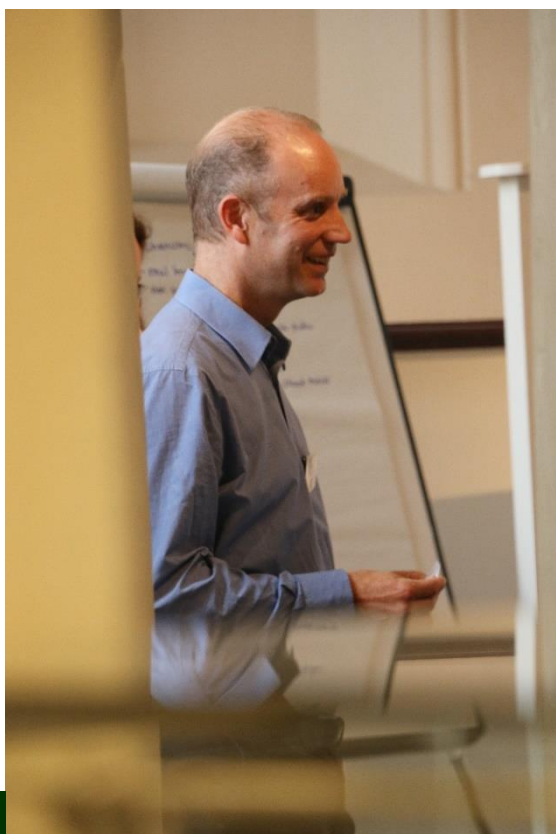
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For kind permission to use the images above in this report, we are very grateful to Margaret Brown (1, 2, 3, 14), Joe Fallon (4), and Gerry Molloy (5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13). 1. Richard Nairn opens the symposium with his lecture on 'Nature of the Irish Sea Coast'; 2. Richard Nairn, Natura Environmental Consultants; 3. Professor John Mack, University of East Anglia, spoke about the need for comparative studies of the Irish Sea; 4. Richard McCormick and Richard Nairn pictured at the opening lecture; 5. Professor Fiona Stafford, University of Oxford, speaking during Q&A; 6. Dr Marcus Collier, University College Dublin, spoke about marine cultural ecosystem services; 7. Cormac Lowth lecturing on Maritime Art; 8. David Snook chairing the maritime heritage workshop session; 9. Richard McCormick at the helm; 10. At a workshop session, in which participants from marine and maritime sciences, humanities, and heritage shared their views on what the Irish Sea contributes to the lives of the people on its islands and shores; 11. Dr Tasman Crowe chairing the marine sciences workshop session; 12. The humanities workshop session gathered under the revolving beam of the Baily optic, which was in operation in Baily Lighthouse at Howth from 1902 to 1972; 13. Each panel of speakers prompted interesting and lively discussions in the Q&A session which followed the presentations; 14. Symposium participants were kept well fed and refreshed throughout the day thanks to the attentive hospitality of museum staff and volunteers.

Atlantic Archipelagos Research Consortium: www.aarco.org

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UCD Humanities Institute: <http://www.ucd.ie/humanities/>

UCD MarBEE (Marine Biodiversity Ecology and Evolution): <http://www.ucd.ie/marbee/>

UCD Scholarcast Series on 'The Literatures and Cultures of the Irish Sea':
<http://www.ucd.ie/scholarcast/series7.html>