

IASIL Japan Newsletter

2017 No. 2

The Japan Branch of the International Association for the Study of Irish Literatures

September 2017

1. IASIL Japan Conference 2016, Kindai University

IASIL Japan Conference 2017 will meet on Saturday 14 and Sunday 15 October at Kindai University with the theme of 'Encounters'. The programme, the book of abstracts, the campus map, and the poster of the conference are downloadable at the IASIL Japan website <<http://iasil.jp/conference.html>>. Students and guests are welcome to attend. We hope to meet you all there.

This year, we introduce online registration system. Please go to our Conference website <<http://iasil.jp/conference.html>> and register by 22 September 2017.

About the Guest Speakers

Margaret Kelleher is Professor and Chair of Anglo-Irish Literature and Drama at University College Dublin. She was the Chair of IASIL for seven years until 2016. Her books include *The Feminization of Famine* (published by Duke UP and Cork UP, 1997) and the landmark publication *The Cambridge History of Irish Literature* (2006), co-edited with Philip Ó Leary. She was the editor (with Michael Kenneally) of *Ireland and Quebec: Interdisciplinary Essays on History, Culture and Society* (2016). She has recently completed a monograph entitled *Language Crossings: Myles Joyce, James Joyce and the Maamtrasna Murders* and a special issue of the journal *Éire-Ireland* on the topic of Ireland and the Contemporary (Summer 2017). Her primary research interests include nineteenth-century literature, famine literature, women's writings, contemporary writing, and the historical relationship between literature in English and Irish. She is UCD academic lead on the Ulysses Centre @ Newman House project, a literary exhibition space (focusing on 20th and 21st century Irish writing) that is being developed by UCD and the National Library of Ireland and which will open to the public in early 2019.

Lia Mills writes novels, short fiction, memoir and literary non-fiction. Her first novel, *Another Alice* (1996), was nominated for the Irish Times Irish Fiction Prize. *Nothing Simple* (2005) was shortlisted for Irish Novel of the Year at the inaugural Irish Book Awards. Her memoir of an experience of oral cancer, *In Your Face*, was named as a favourite book of 2007 by several commentators. Her most recent novel, *Fallen*, was the Dublin/Belfast Two Cities One Book festival selection for 2016. In the same year she was writer-in-residence at Farmleigh House and Arts Council Fellow at University College Dublin and was awarded an Honorary Doctorate in Laws from the University of Dublin, Trinity College.

2. Payment of annual membership fees

If you have not already paid your membership fees for 2017, please do so by the end of September, as the journals will be distributed to paid-up members at the conference. This of course applies to non-paid fees for past years as well.

Membership with <i>JIS</i>	¥7,000	Couple membership with <i>JIS</i>	¥10,000
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<i>JIS</i>	¥ 750	¥ 1,000	¥ 1,300
<i>JIS</i> & <i>IUR</i>	¥ 1,500	¥ 2,000	¥ 2,600

3. Report of IASIL 2017, Nanyang Technological University, Singapore

On July 24-28, 2017, the annual conference of the IASIL was hosted by Nanyang Technological University, Singapore. The conference was held on the theme of 'Ireland's Writers in the 21st Century'. The first Keynote Address by Professor Margaret Kelleher introduced us to ongoing projects that make historical and literary resources accessible as digital texts or database, including 'Inspiring Ireland' of the Digital Repository of Ireland (DRI). Both the two other keynote speakers talked about contemporary Irish novelists: Professor Derek Attridge explored the work of three novelists who have won the Goldsmiths Prize, Kevin Barry, Mike McCormack, and Eimear McBride, revealing for us their innovative forms and literary techniques; Professor Gerry Smyth read Anne Enright's *The Gathering*, centring on the theme of 'betrayal', a theme of historical as well as literary relevance to Irish culture.

The topics of the individual papers were not confined to contemporary literary works; they ranged from the revaluation of canonical figures such as Joyce and Yeats to the cross-cultural or cross-genre development of Irish literary works. Members of IASIL Japan who read papers were Hawk Chang, Andrew Fitzsimons, Eishiro Ito, Wei H. Kao, Youngmin Kim, Haruko Takakuwa, Fuyuji Tanigawa, Chinatsu Toma, Naoko Toraiwa, Kumiko Yamada, Shotaro Yamauchi, and myself. As far as I witnessed and experienced myself, the speakers gained useful feedback from audience and their papers often generated active discussions.

The conference was also enriched by fascinating literary events; on the 24th and 27th, poets from Ireland and Singapore collaborated in reading their own works. ‘Writers Roundtable’ was a rare opportunity for literary scholars to hear from writers themselves about their attitudes towards reviews and criticism of their own work, and about the process of creation. The friendly atmosphere throughout the conference was especially encouraging for postgraduates; this atmosphere will surely pervade future conferences, since it was agreed that the IASIL would continue to welcome the attendance of postgraduate students, encouraging them with workshops and scholarship, as it successfully did this year.

Nao Igarashi (PhD Student, Durham University)

4. IASIL Annual Conference, 23-27 July 2018

The IASIL conference will be hosted by Radboud University, Nijmegen, the Netherlands next year with the theme of ‘Reimagining Traditions’. The conference website is already up and running:

<http://www.ru.nl/iasil2018/>

5. Obituary: Professor Shigeo Shimizu (1943-2017)

The sad news about Professor Shigeo Shimizu’s death following a courageous battle with pancreatic cancer has come as a shock to us all. The late Professor Shimizu was a former member of IASIL Japan, one of the founder members of the James Joyce Society of Japan and served as its president from 2002 to 2013.

Shigeo Shimizu certainly will be remembered as an excellent Joycean. He devoted his entire academic career to the study of James Joyce and explored the oeuvre of this gigantic novelist in English language literature of the 20th century. He was also a great scholar of the Irish language. Being a competent speaker and reader of the modern Irish language, he showed great affection for the old Irish language tradition, especially Brian Merriman’s *Midnight Court*.

We have to remember him as an eager and enthusiastic, sometimes relentless, teacher. He organized many reading circles and encouraged younger generations of Joyceans who participated in them. They were taught how to read Joycean texts and his work as a whole. At Waseda, Shimizu, along with the late Seamus McElwaine, also organized extracurricular courses of Irish language, which were open to anyone who wished to learn the language.

He had another aspect as a translator of Irish literature. The Irish writers he introduced to Japan include such poet as Mícheál Ó Siadhail (a personal friend of Shimizu’s) and contemporary playwrights such as Tom Murphy, Brian Friel, Thomas Kilroy, and Frank McGuinness.

After his retirement from university teaching, he told his family and close friends that he was ready to launch yet another project, to write a book on James Joyce. We now know that sadly the book will never be accomplished.

I wish to express my heartfelt condolences to his wife and children, and his family.

Hiroko Mikami (Waseda University)



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