

IASIL Japan Newsletter

2025 No. 2

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

September 2025

1. IASIL Japan Conference 2025

The 40th IASIL Japan conference, 'Relations', will be held at Seikei University, Tokyo, which is within a walking distance from Kichijo-ji Station (<https://www.seikei.ac.jp/university/aboutus/accessmap.html>) on **Saturday 4th and Sunday 5th October, 2025**.

Please go to our conference website (<http://iasil.jp/conference.html>) and register by **Friday 19th September 2025**. You can also register for the conference by using the QR code on the right. The conference programme and book of abstracts will be digitally distributed to the members of IASIL Japan. As for the programme, it is downloadable from the conference website too. Please note the following:



- **Membership Renewal:** Please renew your membership in advance, if necessary. The Conference Reception will not deal with membership payment transactions.
- **Reception:** Please book via registration form mentioned above and pay in advance.
- **Lunch:** Please make your own arrangements.

For members of IASIL Japan who are unable to attend the conference in person, we will provide a live stream of both the reading session and the lecture by the guest speakers. Those wishing to access the stream should apply using the form below. The application deadline is **19 September 2025**. Access details will be sent by email no later than the day before the conference. You can apply either from here (<https://forms.gle/EPJh8SmY1CqP3qjcA>) or by using the QR code on the right.



About the Guest Speakers

Nick Laird is a poet and novelist. Born in County Tyrone, in 1975, he studied at Cambridge University, and worked as a lawyer before becoming a full-time writer. His first book of poems, *To a Fault* (Faber, 2005), was hailed by Colm Tóibín as 'the most auspicious debut in Irish poetry since Paul Muldoon'. In the same year he published his first novel, *Utterly Monkey*. A second poetry collection, *On Purpose*, followed in 2007, and the novel *Glover's Mistake* in 2009. His third collection *Go Giants* was published in 2015 and his third novel, *Modern Gods*, appeared in 2017. His fourth poetry collection, *Feel Free* was shortlisted for the T. S. Eliot Prize in 2018.

Charles Ivan Armstrong is a professor of English Literature at the University of Agder, Norway. Born in Lørenskog (in Norway) in 1969, he earned his PhD from the University of Bergen in 2001. His research interests range from Irish literature, particularly W. B. Yeats, to English poetry from the Romantic period to

the present, as well as literary theory. He is currently president of both EFACIS (the European Federation of Associations and Centres of Irish Studies) and the International Yeats Society, and has previously been president of the Nordic Association of English Studies, the Nordic Irish Studies Network and academic co-director of the Yeats Summer School. He is also the current group leader for literature in the Norwegian Academy of Science and Letters. In addition to co-editing several essay collections, he has published three monographs: *Romantic Organicism: From Idealist Origins to Ambivalent Afterlife* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), *Figures of Memory: Poetry, Space, and the Past* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), and *Reframing Yeats: Genre, Allusion and History* (Bloomsbury, 2013).

2. New IASIL Executive Committee for 2025-2027

Rui Carvalho Homem, IASIL Returning Officer, reported in April that the nomination process for the IASIL Executive was complete, and that the list of duly nominated members for the period 2025-2027 is as follows:

Christina Morin – Chairperson	Akiko Manabe – Vice-Chairperson for Japan
Deirdre Flynn – Secretary	Naoko Toraiwa – Representative for Japan
Ailbhe McDaid – Treasurer	Miki Iwata – Representative for Japan
Michelle Witen – Returning Officer	Soichiro Onose – Representative for Japan

All positions were filled and were uncontested. Under the applicable regulations, an election was not necessary, and the nominations were validated at the AGM at the University of Galway on 21 July 2025.

3. Payment of Annual Membership Fees

If you have not already paid your membership fees for the fiscal year of 2025 (April 2025-March 2026), please do so **by the end of November**. This of course applies to non-paid fees for past years, as well. Late payments will result in receiving the journal(s) of your subscription in April 2026.

If you are applying for Student membership, please provide the office with a copy of a valid student ID with your payment. Student membership fee has been reduced to 3,000 yen from FY 2025.

Membership with <i>JIS</i>	¥ 7,000	Couple membership with <i>JIS</i>	¥ 10,000
Membership with <i>JIS</i> & <i>IUR</i>	¥ 10,000	Couple membership with <i>JIS</i> & <i>IUR</i>	¥ 13,000
Student with <i>JIS</i> *	¥ 3,000		

*a copy of a valid student ID should be submitted at the beginning of every fiscal year

If you live abroad, you can use PayPal. Please follow the instruction shown in the email you will receive shortly from Treasurer Soichiro Onose <treasurer@iasil.jp>. Or you can transfer your membership fee to the following account:

Bank Name: Sumitomo Mitsui Banking Corporation
 SWIFT Code: SMBCJPJT (in 8 digits); SMBCJPJTXXX (in 11 digits)
 Branch Name: Ikebukuro Higashiguchi Branch (Branch No. 671)
 Branch Address: 2-27-9, Minami Ikebukuro, Toshima-ku, Tokyo, 171-0022, Japan
 Tel: +81(0)3-3971-0166
 Account Name: IASIL Japan

Account No: 9233212 (Savings Account)

The membership fee for overseas members does not include the transfer charge, so please make sure that the exact amount reaches us. Please add the overseas postal charge so that we can post you the copy/copies of *Journal of Irish Studies* (and *Irish University Review*) for which you have paid, according to the table below.

International postal rates for <i>JIS</i> & <i>IUR</i>	Asia	Oceania, North America, Central America, Europe, Middle East	South America, Africa
<i>JIS</i>	¥ 850	¥ 1,000	¥ 1,300
<i>JIS</i> & <i>IUR</i>	¥ 1,500	¥ 2,000	¥ 2,600

NB If you wish to receive *Journal of Irish Studies*, vol. 39 (and *IUR* for those subscribing) at the annual conference in October 2025, please complete your payment **by the end of September 2025**.

4. Report of IASIL 2025 Conference, University of Galway, Ireland

As my train arrived in Galway, my mind wandered over the coming events at the IASIL 2025 Conference hosted by the University of Galway: thought-provoking papers and keynote lectures, chance encounters with friends and acquaintances, zesty book launches and slick screenings of the latest films, the obligatory pub-crawl, and perhaps even a taste of the Galway International Arts Festival which coincided with the conference. Sadly, tickets to the festival sold out months ago, but everything else promised intellectual excitement and collegiate conviviality.

The first panel I attended was one curated by a former fellow PhD cohort, Katie Mishler, and her collaborators involved in the VICTEUR project (<https://projectvictour.com/>), which explores the wider dynamics of migration in the Victorian era using literary data sets. As befitting a conference themed ‘Technology and Ireland’, leveraging technology to enhance literary studies was a common thread that ran through the papers and lectures. The first keynote speaker, Professor Gerardine Meaney, demonstrated how the development of telegraphs and other technologies during the Victorian era transformed Irish migrants’ sense of space and time which, in turn, altered their national consciousness: as the diasporic network expanded, migrants increasingly felt that their ‘Irishness’ was less bound by territorial boundaries.

My second day started with a roundtable on ‘The Early Reception of Irish Literature in Japan’, which showcased the latest research by Professor Andrew Fitzsimons, Professor Masaya Shimokusu, Professor Yuri Yoshino, and Professor Akiko Manabe, who showed how Irish writers as diverse as Lord Dunsany, Lafcadio Hearn, Maria Edgeworth, and W.B. Yeats shaped the literary imagination and style of Japanese writers such as Shiken Morita, Ryunosuke Akutagawa, and Kan Kikuchi in significant ways. The keynote speaker on the second day, Professor Marguérite Corporaal, discussed how technology buttressed the international market for Irish local colour fiction as steamships and transatlantic cables expedited their dissemination across the globe. The last panel was on adaptation and technology. Among the panelists was Professor Miki Iwata, who ended her discussion of *Pygmalion* and its cinematic counterparts with a Shavian twist.

The third day of conference was a day full of drama, in more ways than one. I slipped into the ‘Drama and Theatre’ panel room just in time to hear Professor Akiko Kawaguchi give a dramatic rendition of the scenes in M. J. Molloy’s folk plays. The morning session was followed by a keynote by historian Breandán Mac Suibhne, who teased out the subtle inflections of social hierarchy in Brian Friel’s *Dancing at Lughnasa* by undertaking a thorough research of local history, which involved tracking down the penetration rate of the Marconi radio in West Donegal during the 1930s. Apart from the papers and keynote, the day’s highlight was the items on display from the university library archives, which included a deluxe edition of *Ulysses* illustrated by Henri

Matisse.

Returning on the fourth day with renewed vigour after a half-day rest (and a few pints), I managed a full-day marathon of conference events which began with a panel on Irish cinema, followed by a roundtable on contemporary female Irish writers, and a panel on Sinéad Morrissey where Professor Naoko Toraiwa, invoking the Heideggerian notion of *Gestell* or ‘Enframing’ associated with technology, argued that Morrissey’s Belfast poems reveal the hidden histories of the city. A panel on ‘Disease, Care, Contagion’ followed, where Professor Eri Tanaka read a paper on the role of Leopold Bloom as a caregiver, whose uxorious attention to details concerning sanitation allows Joyce to highlight the unhygienic condition of Dublin at the time. The finale was a sumptuous barbeque dinner!

In a sense, Joyce had the final word, for the last keynote lecture was delivered by Professor Vincent Cheng, who discussed Yeatsian motifs in *Ulysses* by focusing on the figure of the mother, which resonated with a paper read earlier by Professor Fuyuji Tanigawa, who argued that Yeats’s poem ‘The Municipal Gallery Revisited’ can be read as an embryonic presentation of modern Ireland. In many ways, the Galway conference was for me a homecoming of sorts, allowing me to rekindle old ties and forge new ones, and renew my respect and enthusiasm for Irish literature and culture.

Soichiro Onose (Japan Women’s University)

5. IASIL Conference 2026, ‘Translating Ireland’, 6-10 July, 2026

IASIL Conference 2026 will be hosted by our colleagues at **Pázmány Péter Catholic University, Budapest**, with the theme of ‘Translating Ireland’. The first deadline for CFP has been scheduled for December 2025. For more information and updates, please visit IASIL website (<https://www.iasil.org/>). If you wish to present a paper at the conference, please pay your membership fees for the fiscal year of 2025 by **the end of November 2025** so that IASIL Japan Office can register you as eligible for application. IASIL Japan continues to offer a scholarship for a postgraduate student to attend the IASIL conference. Details will be uploaded in November on our website.

6. Report of the Ceremony for the Seamus Heaney Award, Japan 2024

The ceremony for the Seamus Heaney Award, Japan 2024 took place on July 14th 2025 at Ireland House, Tokyo. Christopher Heaney presented Sinéad Morrissey with the award, specially designed for the occasion by artist Richard Gorman.

Ambassador Damien Cole welcomed over fifty guests to the recently opened Ireland House, including representatives from IASIL Japan, members of the Irish community in Tokyo, Japanese friends of Ireland, as well as friends from other countries. Ambassador Cole remarked on the significance of this new development in Ireland-Japan relations, and how delighted the Embassy of Ireland is to support an award that marks the long history of mutual Irish and Japanese literary interest and influence. He spoke of how the work of Sinéad Morrissey continues and enhances this tradition, following on from the inaugural recipient of the award, the eminent Japanese poet, Mutsuo Takahashi.

Current IASIL Japan President, Akiko Manabe was unable to attend and her speech was read by former President Andrew Fitzsimons. Her speech noted that 2025 was a special year in Ireland Japan relations, and for three particular reasons: the new Ireland House, the Irish Pavilion at Osaka Expo, which has been receiving positive responses from the Japanese public, and the upcoming NHK morning drama, which will feature a fictionalized re-telling of the story Lafcadio Hearn’s wife Setsuko. As Manabe-sensei wrote, ‘Contemporary literary relations between Japan and Ireland trace their origins to Lafcadio Hearn, who spent his final years in Japan at the turn of the last century and ultimately became a Japanese citizen. His students and their

successors—such as Bin Ueda, Hakuson Kuriyagawa, Hojin Yano, and Kan Kikuchi—established a strong tradition of Irish literary studies in Japan’.

IASIL Japan and the Embassy of Ireland, she continued, are ‘proud to name Sinéad Morrissey as the second recipient of the *Seamus Heaney Award, Japan*. Among the many places that have influenced her work, Japan holds a special significance. In her review of *Parallax* for *The Telegraph*, Charlotte Runcie described the book as “an ambitious and complex collection, which takes as its broad theme the distance between what we see and how things really are.” It is entirely fitting, then, that the *Seamus Heaney Award, Japan* should be presented to a poet of such depth, vision, and international resonance’.

Christopher Heaney spoke of his father’s many visits to Japan, and how greatly the poet cherished both the country and its people, and the literary bonds between Ireland and Japan. He also spoke of how much it meant to the Heaney family to have an award named for their father in Japan, to mark the poet’s special regard for the country publicly.

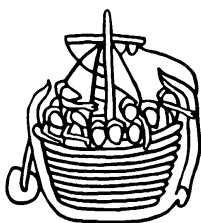
Sinéad Morrissey in receiving the award from Christopher Heaney, spoke of how much both Japan and Seamus Heaney’s work meant to her. In her time in Japan, in Gifu, she had a poem of Heaney’s above her desk as a kind of talisman. Her time in Japan, she said, has marked her entire writing life, not just in those poems located in the country. The ceremonial part of the evening ended with a *biwa* recital by renowned Irish musician, Thomas Charles Marshall, and was followed by a short reception. IASIL Japan thanks the Embassy of Ireland, Tokyo, Ambassador Damien Cole, and Aisling Braiden for their steadfast support, and for organising such a memorable occasion.

Andrew Fitzsimons (Gakushuin University)

7. Announcement: Seamus Heaney Award, Japan 2026

Nominations for the third Seamus Heaney Award, Japan, to be received by 30 November 2025, can be sent by email using the subject line ‘Seamus Heaney Award Japan Nomination’ to:

IASIL Japan Office: < secretary@iasil.jp > or Embassy of Ireland, Japan: < TokyoEmbassy@dfa.ie >.



IASIL Japan

c/o Miki Iwata

Department of English and American Literature, Faculty of Arts, Rikkyo University

3-34-1 Nishi-Ikebukuro, Toshima-ku, Tokyo 171-8501, Japan

Email: secretary@iasil.jp