



UCB Celtic Studies
Journal

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Illustration by Eilish Cullen

Lá Bealtaine

By Elizabeth Gipson

The boundaries between this world and the Other-world are never so tenuous as on the quarter-days of Bealtaine and Samhain. In Irish literary tradition, the latter is seen as a propitious day for battles and adventures. In Welsh tradition, the pattern is reversed and focus falls instead on Bealtaine.

Just as Samhain heralds the beginning of winter, Bealtaine brings with it the start of summer. Traditionally May Bushes were decorated with ribbons, flowers, and shells, and boughs and flowers were hung above a home's entryway.

Bonfires were lit, and until the 19th century cattle were still driven between two fires in order to ensure their health in the coming seasons.

Even as some traditional practices died out, the understanding of Bealtaine as a liminal space on the calendar remained. As Paddy Pharaic Mhichil Shannon says in Eddie Stack's *Doolin*:

“It's safer to be good to the fairies. . . . Fairies are always out and about on May Eve, and I s'pose when they knew someone was dying they all came to the house to see the soul departing.

The same thing happened in this village. A young girl got very sick on May Eve and they put her to bed by the fire. The father went out to get help from an old healer woman who lived beyond in Roadford and was great with children.

On the way back home, they saw the *sí gaoithe* (the fairy wind), and the old woman knew they had the child taken. . . .

Anyway, when they came to the house, the old woman lifted up the blankets and peeped in under them. All that was left was a tiny sick child, thin as a stick. The fairies took the real child and left a changeling in her place. They did that.”

So this May Day, hang a bough and be kind to the fairies - and beware of strange winds.

Berkeley Commemorates the 1916 Rising

By Elizabeth Gipson

2016 marks the 100th anniversary of the Easter Rising and UC Berkeley commemorated the occasion with an evening entitled “Reflecting on the Easter Rising: The 1916 Centenary.” Co-sponsored by the Celtic Studies Program, the Irish Studies Program, and the English Department, the event began with a presentation on the life and legacy of Ella Young by UC Berkeley lecturer emerita Kathryn Klar. Young was an Irish poet, author, and revolutionary, who later in her life would teach at Berkeley as the James D. Phelan Lecturer in Irish Myth and Lore.

Musicians John Caulfield and Vincy Keehan of The Gas Men then gave a stirring performance of “The Ballad of James Connelly,” which led into a round-table discussion featuring Catherine Flynn, Assistant Professor of English; Bob Tracy, Professor Emeritus of English; Thomas Walsh, Lecturer in Celtic Studies; and Philip Grant, the Irish Counsel General in San Francisco.

After the round-table, a lively discussion ensued in the question and answer session, as guests considered the significance of the Rising on modern day affairs in Ireland, and the ways in which the Rising has been commodified and recontextualized globally.



Eric Falci introduces Kathryn Klar
Photography © Alex Madonik



Reflecting on the Rising
John Caulfield & Vincy Keehan, Philip Grant, Bob Tracy, Thomas Walsh, and Catherine Flynn
Photography © Alex Madonik

Celtic Studies represented at the 2016 Digital Humanities Faire

By Dylan Cooper

April 13, 2016. Morrison Library, UC Berkeley -- For the very first year, the Celtic Studies program was proudly represented at the Digital Humanities Faire! The poster session and reception were held in UC Berkeley's Morrison Library on a warm Wednesday evening in April. Elizabeth Gipson, graduating Celtic senior, and Professor Thomas Walsh answered questions, showed off their lovely poster, and informed faire attendees of the interesting and exciting ways Celtic Studies has been utilizing techniques in the digital humanities. The projects highlighted included the Spring 2016 NUIG telecourse with Dr. Louis de Paor, the digital distribution of *Treibh*, and the current work of Celtic alumna, Myriah Williams on the *Black Book of Carmarthen* (stay tuned for a piece on Myriah and her current work at Cambridge University, to be featured in an upcoming issue!).

While schmoozing in true poster session fashion, it was discovered that the head librarian of the Morrison Library, Scott Peterson, is also an alumnus of the Celtic Studies program, having completed the minor with his BA in English in 2000. It's always a pleasure to find fellow Celts in and around Berkeley!

An Online Database for Scottish Gaelic

by Andrea Eberle

The national flower is the thistle. The national animal is the unicorn. What glorious country is this, you ask? Scotland. While people readily associate Scotland with Celtic culture, they are often surprised to hear that there is still a Celtic language being spoken there— Scottish Gaelic, or Gàidhlig. While it is very much a minority language in Scotland, there is still a huge wealth of folklore that was collected in the 19th and 20th centuries in Scottish Gaelic. And now, in recent years, students from Linguistics and Celtic Studies at Berkeley have been working to make this folkloric and linguistic information readily available through an online database.

I was introduced to this project in my sophomore year

here through a program called LRAP (Linguistics Research Apprenticeship Practicum). As a double major in Celtic Studies and Linguistics, I was absolutely thrilled to discover a project that combined both of my academic interests. I had never worked with a language database before but, with a Celtic language involved, I was more than willing to give it a go. I had never formally studied Scottish Gaelic either, but I was simultaneously enrolled in the Modern Irish language series at Berkeley, and was blown away by the similarities between Scottish Gaelic and Irish that constantly popped up. This is not at all surprising since the two languages are very closely related— comparable to the relationship between Spanish and Portuguese.

Aside from the occasional moments of comparative linguistics excitement, working on entering Scottish Gaelic stories into the database allowed me to catch a brief glimpse into the folkloric treasury of Scottish culture. The thought that these charming, and oftentimes amusing, stories might otherwise never be accessible to the general public or be lost altogether to the sands of time is a saddening one. For me, that was the main impetus for the work I did with the database. The more data that could be stored online in a form that might one day be accessible to the world, the better the chance that more people would discover the less appreciated side of Scotland's rich cultural past.

Introduction to the Bancroft Holdings

By Éilish Cullen

The Bancroft Library is the special collections library at the University of California, Berkeley. The Library houses manuscripts, the Rare Books Collection, the Mark Twain Papers and Project, the Oral History Center, the University of California Archives, the History of Science and Technology Program, and the Pictorial Collection. A plethora of unique materials are contained within the Library, including items of special significance to Celtic Studies enthusiasts, students, faculty, and researchers.

In October 2015, President of Ireland, Michael D. Higgins, met with the library's Rare Books Curator David Faulds to view an exhibit containing a privately printed copy of W.B. Yeats's poem "Easter, 1916" as well as letters from Yeats to Mabel Dickinson in which

he calls Countess Markievicz a “steam whistle”; a rare, signed, first-edition copy of James Joyce’s *Ulysses*; and a notebook of Irish poet Seamus Heaney, some of which would later form his collection *Wintering Out*.



A letter from W.B. Yeats to Mabel Dickinson
Photography by Éilish Cullen

The President noted that Berkeley is “an institution that has a bit of Irish in its blood” and, while at Bancroft, he signed his name in the original guest book of Hubert Howe Bancroft, a historian and ethnologist whose collections were purchased by the University of California in 1905.

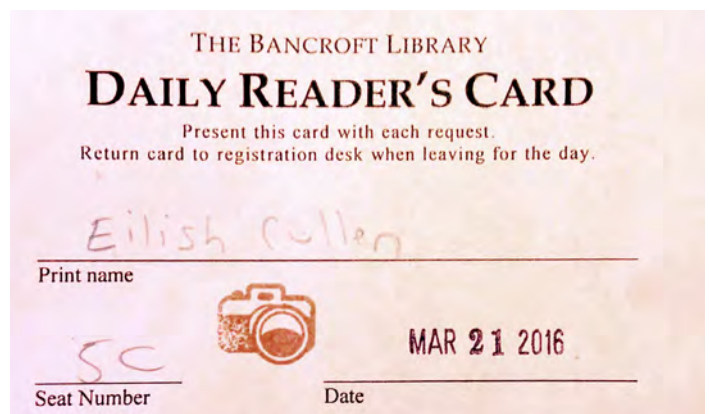
Inspired by President Higgins’s visit, Elizabeth Gipson, Professor Thomas Walsh, and I decided to request some of the materials viewed by President Higgins and research the collection further. We were greeted warmly by Professor Elaine Tennant, Director of the Bancroft. For the Bealtaine issue of *Treibh*, Elizabeth Gipson discusses Seamus Heaney’s notebooks and we will highlight additional library holdings in future journals.

Other materials that are available for viewing at Bancroft include a collection of Irish writer Seán O’Faoláin’s correspondence and manuscript writings; Edith Somerville’s letters, drawings, and notes, as well as clippings and book reviews about her and her work; John P. O’Reilly’s incoming correspondence, including letters from San Francisco Chronicle literary editor, Joseph Henry Jackson, and from Irish authors, Frank O’Connor and Seán O’Faoláin; Irish author James Stephens’s letters to Oliver St. John Gogarty as well as a manuscript of his poem, “The Mighty Mother for AE,” written for his friend, Albert; James Joyce’s letters to Grant Richards; Bernard Shaw’s let-

ters to Alfred G. Gardiner, A.B. Walkley, Frederick H. Evans, and John Lane as well as photocopies of letters and telegrams to Gabriel Pascal about the filming of *Pygmalion*, and typed transcripts of 11 poems written to Ellen Terry; a collection of William Butler Yeats’s letters including those written to Miss Mabel Dickinson, mainly concerning his work with the Abbey Theatre, and commenting on his encounters with John M. Synge, Mrs. Patrick Campbell, Lady Gregory, George Bernard Shaw, and Winston Churchill; Terence Bellew McManus’s diary, which contains details of his escape from Tasmania to San Francisco aboard the barque *Spartan* along with an incomplete transcription, research notes, and correspondence by Anne Chamberlain from 1972-1976 relating to that diary; several noteworthy Welsh oral history recordings and documents; William Griffith Jones’ papers and letters in Welsh; and Patricia A. Etter’s collection on Robert Brownlee, circa 1935-2001, containing research materials used in editing the book, *An American Odyssey: The Autobiography of a 19th c. Scotsman Robert Brownlee at the Request of His Children, Napa County, California, October, 1892* based on the life of a 19th century Scottish immigrant to the United States.

The Bancroft Library is located on campus adjacent to Doe Library, just northwest of the Campanile. When you visit the Library, a pencil and three sheets of paper are permitted. Photos are allowed for a small fee and visitors are asked to view their materials in the Heller Reading Room.

For those wishing to further research the library’s collection, [The Online Archive of California](#) is a comprehensive online guide with a user-friendly format for discovering materials within the collections and locating individual objects or documents.



What Good Are Notebooks?

Heaney at the Bancroft

By Elizabeth Gipson

Long before Seamus Heaney won the Nobel Prize in Literature, he spent a year as a lecturer at UC Berkeley. This year would prove transformative for both his personal and professional life, revealing to him poetry as “a force, almost a mode of power, certainly a mode of resistance,” and giving him the courage to pursue his writing full-time upon his return to Ireland.

After his departure, the Bancroft Library acquired one of Heaney’s journals documenting his time at Berkeley. The small notebook (original price – 39 cents!) contains his hand-written poetry, revisions, doodles, and even the beginning of a course reading list. On the last page a tally of the journal’s poems, each listed one by one, co-exists neatly with a scribbled budget. On another, a new pen is tested alongside a nearly finished poem.

Perhaps the most striking thing about the notebook is how unassuming it is as an object, with its plain cover and pages that have been here and there smeared by rain or drink. There is no self-consciousness about it: poems are cautiously assembled and then demolished again with slashes of pen, with no distinction made between those that will eventually survive the editing process and those that will be nearly entirely lost to time.

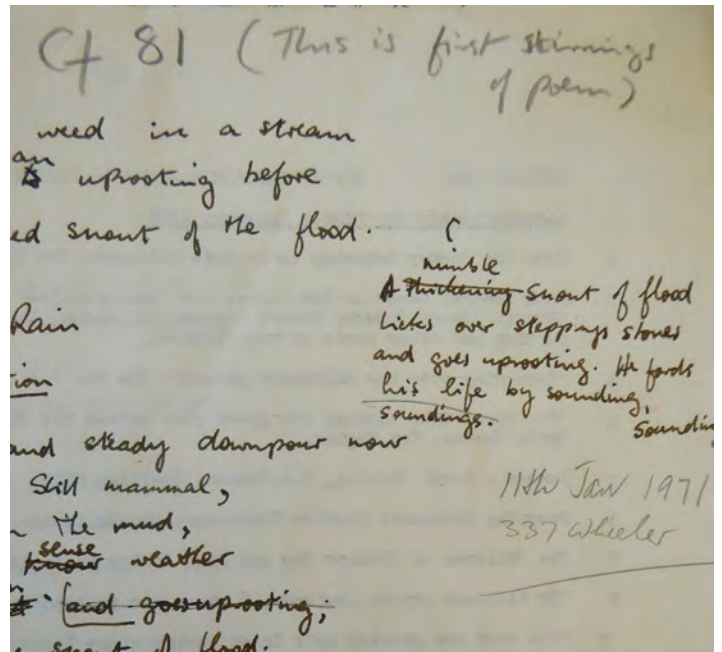
So much of Heaney’s poetry finds both the faltering and the eternal in a single instant – in a perfect joining of place and time – whether the place is Paris or the West of Ireland or a small farm in Derry. In this notebook, California runs throughout:

“The Golden Gate Bridge.” “San Quentin.” “Sailboats on the water.” “1135 Fresno.” “2444 Carleton St.”

Berkeley – and for Heaney, a new beginning.

“Soundings, soundings,” one page reads.

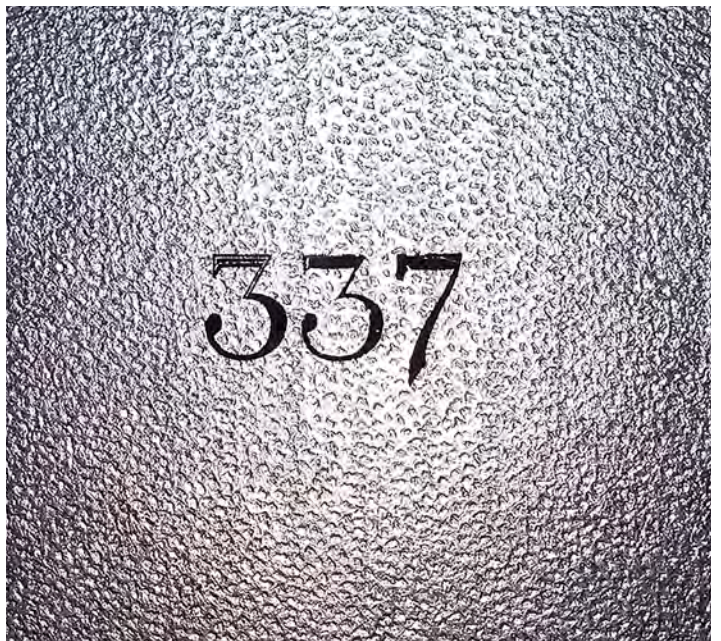
Below it: “First stirrings of poem – 337 Wheeler.”



A page from Heaney’s journal mentioning Wheeler Hall
Photography by Elizabeth Gipson

Selections from Heaney’s Reading List:

- + Sam Cornish
- + June Jordan
- + Sonia Sanchez
- + Gwendolyn Brooks - *Selected Poems*
- + Sylvia Plath - *Ariel*
- + John Berryman - *Dream Songs*
- + Robert Lowell - *For the Union Dead*
- + Robert Bly - *The Light Around the Body*



The door to 337 Wheeler Hall

A Reading by Eddie Stack

By Elizabeth Gipson

Through the combined efforts of the Celtic Studies Program, The Irish Studies Program, and The English Department, Berkeley celebrated this St. Patrick's Day with an evening of story and song as Eddie Stack read from his newest work, *Doolin: People, Place, and Culture*. His chosen extract introduced the audience of students, faculty, and community members to the life of Paddy Pharaic Mhichil Shannon, the last native Irish speaker in Doolin. Born in 1916, Paddy's words are often redolent with a sense of the sweetness of growing up in Doolin and the ache he feels at the changes time wrought in the life of the village.

"'Twas a pity the Irish died out," he says. "An awful lot was lost, all the old songs and recitations and of course the stories, these will never be heard again. And all the sean-fhocals and cures and prayers and things, these are all lost now and more's the pity, because they were very useful. Names are gone for things and there's things now and there's no names for them in English."



Some things are forever unrecoverable, of course, but hearing Paddy's words spoken to a group so keenly interested in the preservation and continuation of the Irish language soothed some of the edge of loss. After the reading and a question and answer session, the audience decamped to a side room for refreshments. A seisiún was soon underway with Stack, The Gas Men fiddler John Caulfield, and actor and musician Aindrias de Staic taking the lead.

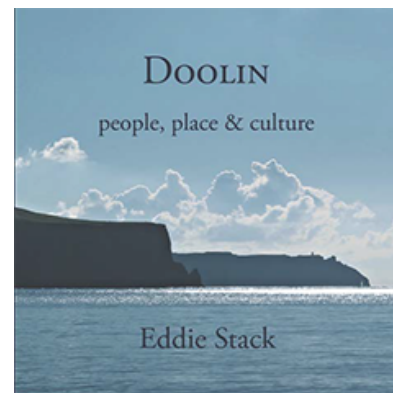
Video of the event was made possible by Victoria Williams and Keith Hernandez and is available to view [here](#).

In addition to *Doolin*, Stack is the author of a novel, a volume of novellas, and three short story collections.

More information about *Doolin: People, Place, and Culture* is available [here](#).



Musicians performing after the reading
Photograph by Dylan Cooper



Flying into Los Angeles: The California Celtic Conference 2016

By Thomas Walsh

Two pillars of Celtic Studies at Berkeley —medievalism and modernism—stood tall at the 38th annual UC Celtic Studies Conference (March 10-12, 2016), organized in a most elegant style by Professor Joseph Nagy on the beautiful UCLA campus. For the medieval side, Professor Nagy introduced our own Dylan Cooper in her first academic presentation, wherein she expanded our understanding of the rhetorical significance of flying, in particular the women’s “word battles” in *Fled Bricrenn*. As to modernism, Professor Eric Falci, the head of our newly established Irish Studies program—thank you President Higgins!—drew Celtic eyes toward the poet Basil Bunting and his use of native Welsh material, particularly the work of Aneirin.

Oh, and the rest of the conference was excellent as well! The diverse nature of Celtic Studies was represented as international luminaries from Ireland, Wales, Holland, and Scotland joined the brightest lights in American Celtic scholarship. To list the worthy papers here would strain the limits of our newsletter. But a glance at the [program](#) will convince even the most jaded conference goer that these were meetings for the ages. Next year’s conference will be held here at Berkeley, where we will be looking over our shoulders as we try to surpass what was a rousing success. We will also take every opportunity to encourage our colleagues at UCLA CMRS and English to meet the biennial challenge yet again in 2018, even as our fearless and well-loved host, Józsi Nagy, wends his way eastward.

New in the O Hehir Room

The O Hehir Reading Room, a resource for students, faculty, and researchers at Berkeley who share an interest in Celtic Studies, saw the donation of several new books to the room.

We have Professor Nioclás Mac Cathmhaiol (University of Ulster) to thank for the following additions.

First is Nioclás’s own work, *Muiris Ó Gormáin: Beatha agus Saothar Fileata*. The book, published in 2013 by An Clóchomhar, surveys the life and work of 18th century Ulster poet Muiris Ó Gormáin, and provides facing translations for thirteen of his poems.

Professor Mac Cathmhaiol also donated copies of Ailbhe Ó Corráin’s “The Pearl of the Kingdom: A Study of A Fhir Léghtha an Leabhráin Bhig by Giolla Brighde Ó hEódhasa” and “The Light of the Universe: Poems of Friendship and Consolation by Giolla Brighde Ó hEódhasa.” The former work was produced for The Marstrander Lecture, and the latter as a sequel to The Marstrander Lecture.

In 2012 and 2013, Professor Mac Cathmhaiol taught two courses for the program: one on Irish dialects and the other on bardic poetry. Both courses offered a rigorous and enjoyable introduction to these areas. Those of us in the field know how valuable a term spent on these two weighty topics can be. Indeed, for our Celtic Studies students it’s hard to imagine a better introduction to the deep reaches of Irish cultural practice.

We are truly grateful for his ongoing generosity and support.

Speaking of Books...

The Celtic Studies program was delighted to receive a surprise boon of over twenty copies of the *Handbook of the Irish Revival* generously donated by Ed Coyne. This landmark volume, edited by Declan Kiberd and P. J. Matthews in 2015, arrived just in time for distribution as gifts to our appreciative graduating Celtic seniors and Irish-language scholarship recipients. Research copies are now available in the O Hehir Room.

Eddie Stack, teacher of Modern Irish at UC Berkeley, called Coyne’s donation “an important and enlightened gift.” He continued, “In certain regards the Revival was the beginning of Celtic Studies as we know it.”

The *Handbook* will be prominently featured in the “Irish Language in Translation” course in Fall 2016.

Celtic Studies UC Berkeley

2016 Awardees

Fulbright Gaeltacht Award:
Brennan Fahselt

NUIG Scholarships:
Éilish Cullen
Theodore Lehre

FLAS Award:
Elizabeth Gipson

Harvard 2016 Presidential Scholar
Heather Newton

Faculty

Dara Hellman

Gary Holland

Kathryn Klar

Daniel F. Melia

Annalee C. Rejhon

Eddie Stack

Eve Sweetser

Thomas Walsh

Treibh is an online journal published by students of the Celtic Studies Program, UC Berkeley.

It will be published at Samhain, Imbolc, Bealtaine, and Lúnasa.

“Treibh” is an Irish word for tribe or race of people.

Editors: Éilish Cullen, Elizabeth Gipson & Thomas Walsh

Production: Eddie Stack

Design & artwork: Éilish Cullen

Contributors:

Dylan Cooper

Éilish Cullen

Andrea Eberle

Elizabeth Gipson

Thomas Walsh

Submissions:

Treibh publishes features relating to Celtic culture, arts, language, history and politics. We are interested in the con-Celtic world both ancient and modern.

At this time submissions should not be more than 500 words. Send us a query if you have a longer piece that you think will rock us. Submissions in any Celtic language are especially welcome.

We are also interested in flash fiction and poetry that has a distinct Celtic flavour.

Flash fiction: max 500 words. Poetry: max 16 lines. We encourage pieces in any Celtic language.

Submissions for the Lughnasadh issue are open May 15, 2016 to June 15, 2016.

We are unable to pay for submissions at present.

treibhucb@gmail.com

6303 Dwinelle Hall, Berkeley CA 94720-2690 | issa@berkeley.edu | 510-642-4484

The UCB Celtic Studies Program Website: <http://celtic.berkeley.edu/>



