

CNCS - Catholicism in the Long Nineteenth Century

Lunchtime Seminar Series

The Centre for Nineteenth Century Studies are delighted to host this year's Durham Residential Library fellows as part of the Catholicism in the Long Nineteenth Century lunchtime seminar series at the IAS Seminar Room, Cosins Hall, Palace Green.

In person seats are **limited to 20** please book your space here. For online attendance please register for a zoom link here



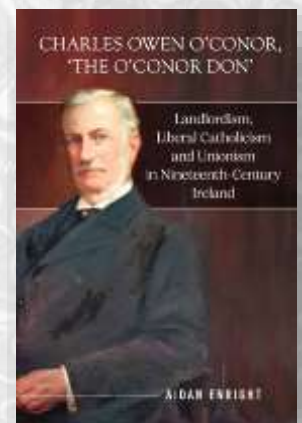
Image credit : The Crucifixion of Our Lord with the Virgin Mary, St John and Mary Magdalene (1854), Franz von Rohden (1817-1903)

13 February Dr Aidan Enright, School of Humanities and Social Sciences, Leeds Beckett University

"A symbol of West Britonism in Ireland": the O'Connor Don and the culture and politics of liberal Catholicism and Catholic unionism, 1860 – 1906.'

Abstract

This paper uncovers the world of Charles Owen O'Connor, the O'Connor Don (1838–1906), one of the most prominent Catholic landlords and Liberal MPs of his generation. The scion of the last high king of Ireland and one of a long line of politically active O'Conors, he was a wealthy, fair-minded landlord who served as MP for his native County Roscommon between 1860 and 1880. In parliament, he supported reforms in education, juvenile care, factory law, Sunday closing, the Irish language and landownership. However, as a loyalist, unionist and imperialist, he was out of step with the mood and aims of popular Irish nationalism, especially on the issue of home rule. Indeed, although he was a devout Catholic, proud Irishman and critic of the union, his liberal Catholic and unionist outlook ensured that he became an increasingly marginalized figure as Irish politics polarized along Catholic nationalist and Protestant unionist lines.



Bio

Aidan is an historian of nineteenth-century Ireland and Britain with particular interests in liberal and conservative Catholicism, Catholic unionism and imperialism, and Irish, English and British Catholic identities. His award-winning



first monograph explores the life of the Irish Catholic landlord, Liberal MP and unionist, Charles Owen O'Connor (1838-1906), the O'Connor Don, addressing the intersections and contradictions of political conviction, religious identity and national affiliation in a historical context that is still deeply relevant in today's political landscape. More broadly, Aidan is interested in liberal politics and political thought in Ireland and Britain, Irish and British imperial experiences, thinking and identities, and the political and cultural lives of the Irish in Britain. Aidan's next project intends to situate the unique context of Irish and British

Catholic networks within a global imperial context.

20 February – Professor Deidre Raftery University College Dublin

Baker Visiting Fellow, University of Durham

‘Growing vocations’: kinship networks, recruitment strategies and female congregations in the long nineteenth-century

This seminar explores how congregations promoted religious life for young women in the long nineteenth century. Drawing on archival collections from Rome, North America, Australia, Ireland and England, it is possible to identify some of the main strategies which were deployed in order to ‘grow vocations’ and expand congregations. Strong kinship networks within congregations was often a predictor of successful expansion. For example, some congregations in England and Ireland had well-known ‘dynasties’, and moved siblings and cousins around the globe to work together to expand their missions. The seminar also looks at evidence for the success of recruitment within convent boarding schools, including ‘questing’ trips whereby small groups of nuns visited classrooms and sodalities to encourage girls to consider religious life. Finally, the presentation discusses a sample of juniorates and mission schools that were founded in order to prepare and ‘test’ young girls to see if they had the potential to become novices. Far from waiting for vocations to religious life, women religious were strategic in planning for the expansion of conventual life that took place in the nineteenth-century Anglophone world. This seminar is based on research undertaken for a recently published book (Deidre Raftery, *Irish Nuns and Education in the Anglophone World: a Transnational History*, Palgrave Macmillan).

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE



Deidre Raftery is Full Professor (History of Education) at University College Dublin, where she contributes to research at both national and international levels. She is an elected Fellow of the Royal Historical Society. Her research on the education of the Irish Catholic diaspora in the nineteenth century had been supported by a Fulbright (Boston College), and she has been awarded visiting fellowships by the University of Oxford, the University of Cambridge, the University of Toronto, the University of Notre Dame, and Trinity College

Dublin. In addition to fifteen book publications, Deidre has written for many international journals and she co-edited *History of Education* (Taylor & Francis) for five years. Recent monographs include *Irish Nuns and Education in the Anglophone World: a Transnational History* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2023), *New Turns in the History of Education in Ireland* (ed., Routledge, 2023), and *Teresa Ball and Loreto Education: Convents and the Colonial World, 1794-1875* (Four Courts Press, 2022). Jointly-authored works include *The Benedictine Nuns and Kylemore Abbey, a History* (Irish Academic Press, 2020), and *Nano Nagle, the Life and the Legacy* (Irish Academic Press, 2019). Jointly-edited works include *Transnationalism, Gender and the History of Education* (Routledge, 2017) and *Education, Identity and Women Religious, 1800–1950* (Routledge, 2016). Deidre returns to the University of Cambridge in Michaelmas Term, 2024, to take up a Visiting Research Fellowship and work on a new book on charitable care by women religious in nineteenth-century Ireland.

11 June Dr Ugo Bruschi Senior Lecturer in Medieval and Modern
Legal History Department of Legal Studies - University of Bologna

The Popish Duke? Branding Wellington as a (Crypto-)Catholic, Emancipation and Beyond

Abstract

The conventional image of the first Duke of Wellington as a politician depicts him as a staunch supporter of a conservative regime if ever there was one, and as an implacable enemy of reform. One would expect such a character to side with the Established Church and fight against Catholic Emancipation and yet it was the duke as prime minister who forced the passage of the Roman Catholic Relief Act in 1829. The outrage and sense of betrayal at his conduct can explain why, in the months leading to emancipation, Wellington was often branded as a secret supporter of Catholicism. However, it was not exclusively the passing of the Relief Act to be seen in this light. Also Wellington's role in the foundation of King's College came, at times, to be perceived as a contrivance to foster the Catholic cause. Even at a later date, such as when, in 1834, the duke took briefly charge of government after Melbourne's fall, some political opponents read his actions as the prologue to the transformation of Britain into a 'popish' country.

It would be easy to dismiss the idea of Wellington as a crypto-Catholic as the result of mixed resentment and paranoia, but the picture is more complex. This leitmotif is strictly connected with the fear for an attack at the balance of the constitution; to make matters worse, constitutional change happened at a moment when a soldier was leading the king's government, and under his direction. In these exceptional circumstances, Catholicism could be once more a byword for absolute rule, or dictatorship: the ghost of a centuries-old polemic was not yet ready to be laid to rest.



Image Credit William Heath, *Receiving Absolution for Past Heresies*, published by Thomas McLean, 1829 © The Trustees of the British Museum

Bio

Ugo Bruschi PhD FRHistS is an historian who works at the University of Bologna; he is a member of various learned societies in the UK, France, Italy and the USA. He began his career as an archivist and then joined academia, publishing widely on the relationship between Church and State in post-Tridentine Italy. British constitutional and political history in the long 18th century has long been his main area of research. He is currently working on two lines of research. The first is about the perception that Italian diplomats in 18th-century Britain had of the British polity; the second deals with the fall of Melbourne's government in November 1834 and the Duke of Wellington's 'stopgap' administration, which preceded the formation of Sir Robert Peel's ministry. In order to carry out extensive research on this second topic he has been awarded a Barker Fellowship by the University of Durham.