

---

## THE ACADEMY

The Royal Irish Academy / Acadamh Ríoga na hÉireann is an all-Ireland, independent, academic body that promotes study and excellence in the sciences, humanities and social sciences. It is the principal learned society in Ireland and has approximately 300 members who are elected in recognition of their academic achievements.

### THE ACADEMY:

- | Co-ordinates scholarship on a cross-institutional, interdisciplinary, national and international basis.
- | Recognises and awards academic excellence.
- | Provides independent expert advice on academic matters and issues of public interest.
- | Provides an independent forum and a voice for the Irish academic community.
- | Represents Ireland on international academic organisations.
- | Organises lectures, conferences, symposia, discourses.
- | Funds doctoral and post-doctoral researchers in the Social Sciences (Voluntary Sector).
- | Funds study visits, academic exchanges and visiting fellowships.
- | Manages six national research and publication projects.
- | Facilitates scholarship by sustaining one of the finest research libraries in Ireland.
- | Publishes academic journals, monographs and historic maps.

### ORIGINS

The Academy was founded in 1785. Its first President was James Caulfeild, Earl of Charlemont, the 'volunteer earl'.

The Academy has remained at the centre of the serious study of Irish civilization ever since [1785], for although all sorts of more or less ephemeral societies sprang up with similar objectives, none of them competed with the Academy, which laid down the standards of scholarship that by the end of the nineteenth century had made 'Celtic' or Irish studies a rigorous discipline attracting continental as well as local scholars of the highest calibre'.

F.S.L. Lyons,

*Culture and Anarchy in Ireland 1890–1939 (1979).*

### FUNDING

The Academy receives its funding from both public and private sources. By far the largest proportion, however, comes in the form of a grant-in-aid from the Higher Education Authority.

Other funders include the Department of Foreign Affairs, the Department of the Environment and Local Government, Science Foundation Ireland and the Office of Public Works.

The Academy welcomes support for its programme of activities. Current major sponsors include: DEPFA BANK plc, Atlantic Philanthropies and the Irish Times.

For further information about the Academy and its activities see [www.ria.ie](http://www.ria.ie)

---

## MEMBERSHIP

Election to membership of the Royal Irish Academy is a public recognition of academic excellence. It is the highest academic honour in Ireland and is only open to those resident in Ireland. Those elected are entitled to use the designation “MRIA” after their name.

### ELECTION OF MEMBERS

The criterion for election to membership is a significant contribution to scholarly or scientific research as shown in the candidate’s published academic work. Only twenty new members are elected each year (equally divided between the sciences and the humanities/social sciences), and so competition is keen. Candidates have to be proposed and recommended by five members. Elections take place on 16th March each year.

Members assist the Academy in its work by providing expert advice on its councils and committees, representing the Academy nationally and internationally and by promoting the role of the Academy.

The Academy is governed by the President and a Council of twenty-one members. The Executive Committee, which comprises the officers of the Academy, oversees the day-to-day business of the Academy on behalf of the Council.

### MEMBERS OF THE ACADEMY

Amongst the membership of the Academy are many of Ireland’s leading scholars, the best known of whom include: **Seamus Heaney**, Nobel Laureate; **Joe Lee**, historian; **Seamus Deane**, literary scholar; **Garret FitzGerald**, Taoiseach 1981–2, 1982–7; **Brendan Walsh**, economist; **Michael Laver**, political scientist; **Dermot Gleeson**, barrister; **Anngret Simms**, geographer; **Richard Kearney**, philosopher; **Peter Sutherland**, lawyer and banker; **Pat Fottrell**, biochemist; **Mary Robinson**, former President of Ireland; **Mary McAleese**, current President of Ireland.

**Other well known Members of the Academy have included:** **W.B. Yeats**, poet; **James Gandon**, architect; **Henry Grattan**, politician; **William Rowan Hamilton**, world-renowned mathematician; **Francis Beaufort**, hydrographer and originator of the Beaufort Wind Scale; **Eoin MacNeill**, politician and historian; **Ernest Walton**, winner of the Nobel Prize for Physics (1951); **William Wilde**, polymath and father of the playwright, Oscar; **Walter Heitler**, physicist; **Frank Mitchell**, natural historian; **William Hunter McCrea**, astronomer; **Seán Lemass**, Taoiseach 1959–66; **Cearbhall Ó’Dálaigh**, Attorney General 1946–8, 1951–3 and President of Ireland 1974–6; **Frederick Boland**, diplomat; **J.P. Beddy**, public servant; **Arthur Cox**, solicitor; **F.S.L. Lyons**, historian; **Michael Morris**, 3rd Baron Killanin and President of the International Olympic Committee; **Eamon de Valera**, Taoiseach 1932–48; 1951–4; 1957–9 and President of Ireland 1959–73.

For a full list of Members see  
[www.ria.ie/academy/members.asp](http://www.ria.ie/academy/members.asp)

---

## HONORARY MEMBERS

Another way in which the Academy forges links with the international academic community is through the election of distinguished foreign academics to honorary membership of the Academy.

For election to honorary membership, the candidate must have made a major internationally-recognised contribution to an academic discipline and have some connection to Ireland.

### HONORARY MEMBERS OF THE ACADEMY

**Andrew Huxley**, Nobel Prize for Medicine or Physiology (1963)

**Francis Crick**, Nobel Prize for Physiology or Medicine (1962)

**Robert M. Solow**, Nobel Prize for Economics (1987)

**Michael F. Atiyah**, Fields Medal Winner (1966)

**Quentin Skinner**, recipient of the biennial Benjamin E. Lippincott Award

**Alasdair McIntyre**, leading philosopher and ethicist

**Cathleen Synge Morawetz**, mathematician, Outstanding Woman Scientist for 1993

**Murray Gell-Mann**, Nobel Prize for Physics (1969)

**Thomas Moore**, poet

**Onora O'Neill**, philosopher

**Other Honorary Members of the Academy have included:** **Edmund Burke** (1790); **Johann van Goethe** (1825); **Mary Somerville** (1834); **Caroline Herschel** (1837); **Maria Edgeworth** (1842); **William Wordsworth** (1846); **Charles Darwin** (1866); **Henry Longfellow** (1873); **Louis Pasteur** (1878); **William Kelvin** (1878); **Joseph Lister** (1886); **Dmitry Mendeléyev** (1889); **Jacobus Henricus Van't Hoff**, Nobel Prize for Chemistry (1901); **Ivan Pavlov**, Nobel Prize for Physiology or Medicine (1904); **Ernest Rutherford**, Nobel Prize for Chemistry (1908); **Johannes Diderik van der Waals**, Nobel Prize for Physics (1910); **Richard Willstätter**, Nobel Prize for Chemistry (1915); **Max Planck**, Nobel Prize for Physics (1918); **Albert Einstein**, Nobel Prize for Physics (1921); **Niels Bohr**, Nobel Prize for Physics (1922); **Werner Heisenberg**, Nobel Prize for Physics (1932); **Erwin Schrödinger**, Nobel Prize for Physics (1933); **Enrico Fermi**, Nobel Prize for Physics (1938); **Max Born**, Nobel Prize for Physics (1954); **Melvin Calvin**, Nobel Prize for Chemistry (1961); **Dorothy Hodgkin**, Nobel Prize for Chemistry (1964); **Alan Hodgkin**, Nobel Prize for Physiology or Medicine (1963)

For more information about Members of the Academy see [www.ria.ie/academy/members.asp](http://www.ria.ie/academy/members.asp)

---

## THE ACADEMY'S ACADEMIC COMMITTEES AND ITS INTERNATIONAL AFFILIATIONS

The Academy's National Committees have an expert membership drawn from universities, professional institutions, government and other interested bodies throughout the island of Ireland. The Committees provide a strategic vehicle for all of the academic disciplines within their area, and act as the main national forum providing input into areas of strategic importance, such as government policy, international research priorities and issues of public concern. They also organise conferences, and encourage excellence in science through the awarding of grants and special medals.

A primary function of each of the Academy's Expert Committees is to act as the Irish affiliating body to the relevant international academic unions. These include:

**ACIS**, American Conference for Irish Studies

**AIEA**, Association Internationale des Etudes Arméniennes

**AIEB**, Association Internationale des Etudes Byzantines

**ALLEA**, All European Academies

**CAIS**, Canadian Association for Irish Studies

**CDRILA**, Conference of Directors and Representatives of Institutes of International Affairs

**CIPL**, Permanent International Committee of Linguistics

**EPS**, European Physical Society

**ESF**, European Science Foundation

**FIEC**, International Federation of the Societies of Classical Studies

**FISP**, International Federation of the Societies of Philosophy

**IAU**, International Astronomical Union

**ICO**, International Commission for Optics

**ICMI**, International Commission on Mathematical Instruction

**ICSU**, International Council for Science

**IGBP**, International Geosphere Biosphere Programme

**IGU**, International Geographic Union

**IMU**, International Mathematical Union

**INQUA**, International Union for Quaternary Research

**IUBMB**, International Union of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology

**IUBS**, International Union of Biological Sciences

**IUGG**, International Union of Geodesy and Geophysics

**IUGS**, International Union of Geological Science

**IUHPS-DHS**, International Union of History and Philosophy of Science, Division of History

**IUHPS-DLMPS**, International Union of History and Philosophy of Science, Division of Logic, Methodology and Philosophy of Science

**IUNS**, International Union of Nutritional Sciences

**IUPAC**, International Union of Pure and Applied Chemistry

**IUPAP**, International Union of Pure and Applied Physics

**IUTAM**, International Union of Theoretical and Applied Mechanics

**SIL**, International Society of Limnology

**URSI**, International Union of Radio Science

For more information about the Academy's Expert Committees see [www.ria.ie/committees/committees.html](http://www.ria.ie/committees/committees.html)

---

## RESEARCH PROJECTS

### DICTIONARY OF IRISH BIOGRAPHY (DIB)

The remit of the DIB is to publish a multi-volume biographical dictionary treating the lives of some 9,000 deceased prominent men and women who had an impact on Irish society. The DIB will range in time from the fifth to the early twenty-first century. The DIB will be published in six volumes by Cambridge University Press in 2005 and will be published subsequently in electronic format.

For further information see [www.ria.ie/projects/dib.html](http://www.ria.ie/projects/dib.html)

### IRISH HISTORIC TOWNS ATLAS (IHTA)

The IHTA was established in 1981 to record the topographical development of Irish towns. *Kildare* (1986), *Carrickfergus* (1986), *Bandon* (1988), *Kells* (1990), *Mullingar* (1992), *Athlone* (1994), *Maynooth* (1995), *Downpatrick* (1997), *Bray* (1998), *Kilkenny* (2000), *Dublin, part 1, to 1610* (2002), *Belfast, part 1, to 1840* (2003) have been published to date. Each contains a large-scale (1:2500) colour map reconstructing the town or city in *c.* 1840, historical plans, views and illustrations, and a detailed text section with explanatory maps.

For further information see

[www.ria.ie/projects/ihta/ihta.html](http://www.ria.ie/projects/ihta/ihta.html)

### FOCLÓIR NA NUA-GHAEILGE — DICTIONARY OF MODERN IRISH (FNG)

The object of the FNG project is to publish a historical dictionary of modern Irish for the period 1600 up to the

present day. As a preliminary step, a data-base of over 500 texts from 1600 to 1882 has been compiled and will be published on CDROM.

For further information see

[www.ria.ie/projects/fng/fng.html](http://www.ria.ie/projects/fng/fng.html)

### NEW SURVEY OF CLARE ISLAND

The aim of the New Survey of Clare Island project is to assess the environmental changes that have taken place since the completion of the first survey of Clare Island, Co. Mayo, in 1911. This multidisciplinary project co-ordinates the work of over 100 academics in five sections: Archaeology, Botany, Geology, History and Zoology. Volume 1, *History and Cultural Landscape* (1999), Volume 2, *Geology* (2001), and Volume 3, *Marine Intertidal Ecology* (2002) have been published.

For further information see

[www.ria.ie/projects/clare\\_island.html](http://www.ria.ie/projects/clare_island.html)

### DICTIONARY OF MEDIEVAL LATIN FROM CELTIC SOURCES (DMLCS)

The DMLCS is an integrated database and dictionary project, designed to contribute to the fields of Patristic, Medieval, Celtic and Latin studies by compiling and publishing suitable scholarly works, both in electronic and in conventional media.

For further information see

[journals.eecs.qub.ac.uk/dmlcs.html](http://journals.eecs.qub.ac.uk/dmlcs.html)

## RESEARCH PROJECTS & FUNDING

### DOCUMENTS ON IRISH FOREIGN POLICY (DIFP)

The DIFP project selects and publishes a comprehensive, accurate and reliable documentary record of major Irish foreign policy decisions and actions of the twentieth century. Volumes I 1919–22 (1998), II 1923–6 (2000) and III 1926–32 (2002) have been published to date.

For further information see  
[www.ria.ie/projects/difp/difp.html](http://www.ria.ie/projects/difp/difp.html)

### IRISH COUNCIL FOR BIOETHICS (ICB)

The ICB was established by the Academy as an independent autonomous body in May 2002. Its terms of reference are:

(1) To identify and interpret the ethical questions raised by biological and medical research in order to respond to, and anticipate questions of substantive concern.

(2) To investigate and report on such questions in the interests of promoting public understanding, informed discussion and education.

(3) In the light of the outcome of its work, to stimulate discussion through conferences, workshops, lectures, published reports, and where appropriate, suggest guidelines.

For further information see [www.bioethics.ie](http://www.bioethics.ie)

### RESEARCH FUNDING

The Academy operates the following research funding schemes:

| The Third Sector Research Programme (TSRP) encourages a network of researchers with an interest in voluntary or third sector issues, such as social economy, non-profit, non-governmental or third-sector organisations, and philanthropy. It also aims, through research grants and scholarships, to increase the extent and the quality of research in the area, and to encourage the dissemination of research findings within the academic community and the voluntary sector itself. The TSRP is the first and only programme of its kind in Europe.

For further information see  
[www.ria.ie/committees/tsrp/home.html](http://www.ria.ie/committees/tsrp/home.html)

| British Academy Exchange Schemes:

| Exchange Schemes with Academies of Science in Austria, Hungary, Poland and Slovenia

| “Ulysses” — The Ireland–France Exchange Scheme

| Royal Society Ireland/UK Exchange Scheme

| Royal Society Ireland/UK Joint Projects

| International Senior Visiting Fellowships

| China–Ireland Exchange

| Archaeology Research/Excavation grants

For further information see  
[www.ria.ie/awards/awards.html](http://www.ria.ie/awards/awards.html)

---

## ACADEMY PUBLICATIONS

The Academy is one of the longest-established publishers in Ireland, starting with the *Transactions* in 1787, and continues to be at the forefront of Irish publishing through such initiatives as the *Cathach* CD-ROM.

Six journals are currently published: three sections of *Proceedings* – *Mathematical Proceedings*, *Biology and Environment* and *Proceedings*, Section C (History and Archaeology) – as well as *Ériu*, the leading journal in Irish philology and literature, *Irish Journal of Earth Sciences* and *Irish Studies in International Affairs*.

Over the Academy's long history as a journal publisher important articles on diverse areas of study have been published by authors such as William Rowan Hamilton, Robert Mallet, Eoin MacNeill, T.J. Westropp, Françoise Henry, Garret FitzGerald and Kuno Meyer.

The Academy's book output is mainly based on its own research programmes, such as the *Irish Historic Towns Atlas* series, *Documents on Irish Foreign Policy*, *Foclóir na Nua Ghaeilge*, *Dictionary of Medieval Latin from Celtic Sources* and the *New Survey of Clare Island*. Other notable series are the *Medieval Dublin Excavations* series in association with the National Museum of Ireland and the *Discovery Programme* series in association

with the Discovery Programme Ltd. In the recent past the Academy published the definitive *Atlas of Ireland* and the hugely successful *Treasures of Ireland*, published in four languages.

This diverse publication programme reflects the Academy's continuing contribution to cultural life in Ireland and further afield.

For further information see  
[www.ria.ie/publications/publications.html](http://www.ria.ie/publications/publications.html)

---

## ACADEMY LIBRARY

The Academy Library has the largest Irish-language manuscript collection in the world including the *Book of Ballymote*, *Lebor na hUídbre* (the Book of the Dun Cow), the oldest extant manuscript completely in Irish, *Leabhar Breac* and the *Book of Lecan*.

The earliest manuscript is the sixth-century *Cathach*, a copy of the psalms of David reputed to have been copied by St Columcille, which led to his exile on the island of Iona.

The Academy has an active digitisation programme under which most of the early manuscripts are being digitised for access via [www.isos.dcu.ie](http://www.isos.dcu.ie)

Other important manuscripts are the *Annals of the Four Masters*, the sixteenth- to seventeenth-century *Deeds of the Guild of St Ann* and a fifteenth-century *Book of Hours* that once belonged to Mary, Queen of Scots.

The Academy holds important collections of scientific papers particularly in the areas of natural history and early Irish medicine. There are also thirty-six medical manuscripts dating from the middle ages, mostly Irish translations from the works of Hippocrates, Avicenna, Bernard of Gordon, and Galen.

### SPECIAL COLLECTIONS

The Library has an excellent collection of antiquarian books of Irish interest together with some specialist libraries, for example, the library of Thomas Moore, Hon. MRIA (1779–1852), which includes a fine collection of classical titles and continental works of literary note. The Osborn Bergin Collection is an important philological collection containing rare titles, many of which were annotated by Bergin (1873–1950).

The Holiday Pamphlet Collection consists of around 25,000 seventeenth- to nineteenth-century items. It covers a huge range of topics, including history, economic and social history, politics, ecclesiastical history, education, law, literature, medicine, agriculture and industry. The collection is complemented by the Academy Tract Collection, a large collection of rare sixteenth- to nineteenth-century pamphlets and tracts relating to Ireland.

### LIBRARY READERS

The Library provides research facilities to all those who need to access its collections and participates in the ALCID scheme (Academic Libraries Co-operating in Dublin). The Library staff welcome enquiries and are pleased to organise visits and talks for interested groups; they can also facilitate master classes using the Library's resources.

For further information see [www.ria.ie/library/home.html](http://www.ria.ie/library/home.html)

---

## ACADEMY HOUSE

Academy House, situated at 19, Dawson Street, adjacent to the Mansion House and St Ann's Church, has been the home of the Academy since 1851. The building dates from c. 1750. It was probably built for Sir John Denny Vesey. From 1769 it was owned by Viscount Northland and known as Northland House. Towards the end of the eighteenth century it was the home of a Huguenot Refugee Surgeon, Adriene. Before it came into the possession of the Academy it was successively a Freemasons' tavern, a Conservative Club and a Reform Club.

The architect of the main house is not known, but it is a good example of an eighteenth-century town house, and there is some very fine decorative plasterwork around the staircase in the inner hall. The staircase decoration is a combination of free rococo invention with Chinese frets, recalling the designs of Jean Berain. The wall plasterwork has something of the flavour of the style called 'Chinese Chippendale'. The two rooms built onto the rear of the building, the Reading and Meeting Rooms, were designed by Frederick Villiers Clarendon and opened in 1854.

The design of the Meeting Room was inspired by P.C. Hardwick's Booking Hall at Euston Station (of 1846–9 no longer extant). The President's chair is reputed to have been the Lord Chancellor's chair in the old Irish House of Lords. The Members' benches and the chandeliers are from the old Irish Parliament on College Green. This room is now used for conferences, lectures and library exhibitions. Both the Meeting Room and Reading Rooms house the Vierpyl bust collection, a collection of heads of Roman emperors and

empresses sculpted by Simon Vierpyl in Rome during the period 1751–5 and based on the antique originals held in the Capitoline Museum.

Throughout the ground floor of the building there are fine portraits of Members of the Academy, eight of which were painted by Sarah Purser, RHA. Other items of note are the harp that belonged to Thomas Moore, and the elegant cabinet with inlaid marquetry labels on the front referring to the Council and Academy Committees, which is housed in the Members' Room and was executed for the Academy by Oliver Goldsmith's brother, Maurice.

Academy House was home to many of Ireland's finest national treasures including the Ardagh Chalice and Tara Brooch until 1890 when the Academy transferred its collections to the newly established National Museum of Ireland.

Academy House is maintained by the Office of Public Works, who have recently leased additional office accommodation for the Academy in neighbouring Bective House.

---

## CHRONOLOGICAL HISTORY OF THE ROYAL IRISH ACADEMY 1785–2003

**1785**

The Royal Irish Academy was founded in May 1785 to promote study in the sciences, humanities and social sciences in Ireland.

The *Book of Ballymote* was presented to the Academy by the Chevalier O’Gorman. This manuscript is a collection of Gaelic literary, genealogical, legal and political tracts collected in the early fifteenth century.

**1786**

The Academy was incorporated by Royal Charter of George III in January 1786.

**1787**

*The Transactions of the Royal Irish Academy* first appeared and were published regularly until 1907.

The Academy acquired the *Book of Lecan*. This is a fifteenth century Irish manuscript written by Gilla Íosa Mór Mac Fírbis of Lecan in Sligo who was hereditary poet and historian of the O’Dowds. The manuscript is a store house of Irish genealogical and historical lore.

**1789**

Timothy Cunningham, a barrister of Gray’s Inn, left £1,000 to the Academy. With this money the Academy established the Cunningham Medal to award its outstanding Academicians.

Amongst its recipients were Sir William Rowan Hamilton (1848), Sir William Wilde (1873), Frank Mitchell (1989) and Maurice Craig (2001)

**1789**

The Academy acquired *The Leabhar Breac*, or ‘Speckled Book’. This is an Irish manuscript written on vellum about the beginning of the 15th century by the Egans of Duniry, hereditary brehons to the O’Connors of Connaught. The contents are chiefly religious including lives of Saints Patrick, Brigid and Columcille.

**1800**

The Academy received its first annual government grant of £166. This was increased to £300 in 1816.

**1826**

Academy’s Members Dining Club was founded.

**1831**

Two volumes of *The Annals of the Kingdom of Ireland*, familiarly known as the *Annals of the Four Masters* were acquired. This manuscript chronicles events in Irish history from the earliest times to A.D. 1616. The third volume covering the period up to 1171 was acquired in 1883.

**1836**

The *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy* first appeared and have done so continuously since that date. They were envisaged ‘as a repository for scattered facts and important notices which might otherwise be lost’.

**1837**

Sir William Rowan Hamilton was elected President of the Academy.

**1843**

*The Cathach*, or psalter of St Columcille (Columba), a Vulgate version of the Psalms was acquired. It is the greatest treasure of the Academy Library. According to tradition it was written by St Columcille about 560 AD and is the manuscript which he is said to have copied unlawfully and secretly from one lent to him by St Finian of Clonard. This copying led to a quarrel, to the well-known judgement of the High King of Ireland, ‘To every cow belongs her calf and to every book its copy’ and to the Battle of Cul Dreimhne in 561, after which St Columcille went to Iona. *The Cathach* was taken to France after the Treaty of Limerick but was entrusted to the care of the Academy in 1843.

**1845**

'We think the public and the government disgraced by the slight support given to the Academy. We are not a little proud of the honour and strength given to our country by the science of [James] MacCullagh, [William Rowan] Hamilton and [Humphrey] Lloyd'.

**Thomas Davis, poet, journalist and Young Irelander in *The Nation*, 5 July 1845**

**1847**

The Academy undertook an exploration of Dowth, long recognised as one of Ireland's great historic monuments.

**1850**

The Academy established twelve weather stations throughout Ireland to collect data in order to study Irish meteorology and tidal observations.

**1852**

The Academy moved into No. 19 Dawson Street from Navigation House, 114 Grafton Street. Academy House was the town house of Lord Northland whose son, the Hon. George Knox, MRIA, was a friend of Theobald Wolfe Tone. Knox delivered to Goethe the Academy's certificate of honorary membership.

**1853**

The Academy loaned the bulk of its antiquities collection for display at the Dublin International Exhibition.

**1854**

The newly constructed Meeting Room and Reading Room, were opened.

**1855**

The library of poet, **Thomas Moore**, Hon. MRIA, was presented to the Academy on his death. These nearly 2,000 volumes are now housed in the Council Room of the Academy.

**1858**

The *Book of Fermoy* was acquired. This is a history of the Roche family of Fermoy, written in the fifteenth century. It contains bardic poems, historical tracts, and mythological tales.

**1861**

The Academy was granted the right to acquire all objects of antiquity found as treasure trove within Ireland.

**1867**

**Charles Haliday**, a leading Dublin merchant and the historian of Scandinavian Dublin bequeathed to the Academy his enormous collection of pamphlets, which cover the period 1578 to 1866.

**1868**

The Tara Brooch was purchased by the Academy for £200.

**1876**

Following a stormy Academy meeting, Isaac Butt, barrister and nationalist politician, fails to be elected MRIA. He had founded the Home Rule League in 1873 and had been the first Professor of Political Economy at Trinity College, Dublin on his appointment in 1836.

**Margaret Stokes** was elected Hon. MRIA

**1879**

**William Maunsell Hennessy** was appointed the Royal Irish Academy's first Todd Professor of the Celtic Languages.

**1880s**

The Academy gave Edmund William Davy, MRIA, a research grant to study the constituents of opium. Reports on this work are to be found in the *Transactions* for 1880–6. In the 1870s Davy described a new chemical test for alcohol, an improvement on Marsh's test for arsenic and a method for the determination of nitrates. He also received a grant from the Academy to investigate the chemistry of selenium.

Academy gave grants to enable dredging and trawling to be carried out in up to 1200 fathoms of the south east coast to improve the knowledge of the fauna of the area.

**1883**

*The Stowe Missal*, the oldest surviving mass book of the early Irish church was acquired along with almost 150 other Irish manuscripts from the Stowe Collection.

**1890**

The Academy's treasures, which include the Ardagh Chalice, the Cross of Cong and the Tara Brooch, were transferred to the newly-established National Museum of Ireland under an agreement which reserved the 'charge and custody' of the collections to the Academy.

**1893**

The Academy appointed a Flora and Fauna Committee to co-ordinate research work in these areas relating to Ireland and to advise on research funding.

1896

The Academy subsidised an expedition to Rockall to study the flora and fauna.

1909 – 1911

The Academy undertook its first multi-disciplinary survey of Clare Island, Co Mayo.

1910

Membership of the Academy: 302 (including honorary members.)

1917

The Academy decided to limit the number of Members elected annually to seven.

1920s

The Academy organised a gramophone recording of the Irish language dialects of the four provinces for the director of the Lautabteilung of the Prussian State Library.

1924

**W.B. Yeats**, poet, Nobel Laureate, and Irish Free State senator, was elected MRIA. In 1927 W.B. Yeats resigned his membership of the Academy because the Academy turned down his suggestion that it should establish a section for Arts or Letters. The Academy's charter did not allow it to do so.

*The Whig* of 4 January 1924 noted that despite partition that the Academy was to remain the Royal Irish Academy of all Ireland and was thus a 'symbol of national unity in literature, science and art'.

1925

The government of the Irish Free State doubled the Academy's annual grant to £3,200.

1927

The Academy took over the work of the School of Irish Learning and the publication of its journal *Ériu*.

1933

The Academy took legal opinion on the eligibility of women for election to membership.

1938

The Academy assisted in the restocking of Peipang University Library by sending a full set of all its periodicals and other publications

1940s

The Academy established three temporary professorships – Mathematical Logic (1946), Linguistic Science (1947) and Archaeology (1947) – filled respectively by Jan Lukasiewicz, Ernst Lewy and Gerhard Bersu.

1949

The Academy elected the first women members:

**Françoise Henry**, art historian,  
**Phyllis Clinch**, botanist and plant virologist, who devoted her energies to the study of potato virus diseases. She served as Vice-president of the Academy 1975–7,  
**Eleanor Knott**, celticist,  
**Sheila Tinney**, mathematical physicist.

1950s

From the mid-1950s the Academy began constituting 'national committees', each relating to a special field of study. These National Committees represent Ireland's interests on international academic organisations and promote the research of the subject. The National Committee for Maths was the first one founded (1955).

1956

The National Committee for Chemistry was established.

1961

The National Committee for Biology was established.

1964

Mr Eamon de Valera, President of Ireland, presented the Academy with a holograph letter from Albert Einstein and a rare edition of an astronomical treatise *Epytoma Joannis de Monteregio in Almagestum Ptolomei*, printed in Venice in 1496.

1968

The New History of Ireland project commenced.

1969

The Academy publishes a *Register of Scientific Research Personnel*, the first publication of its type in Ireland.

1976

The final fascicle of the *Old and Middle Irish Dictionary* was published.

1978

Frank Mitchell, President of the Academy, called on Mr George Colley TD, Tánaiste and Minister for Finance, to express the concerns of the Academy in regard to the building of the Dublin Civic Offices at a site of great archaeological importance on Wood Quay.

1979

The Academy launched the journal *Irish Studies in International Affairs*.

*The Atlas of Ireland* was published.

Miss C. Longfield donated a valuable collection of entomological books to the Academy.

**1981**

The Irish Historic Towns Atlas research and publication project was established.

**1984**

The Academy took over the publishing of the *Irish Journal of Earth Sciences* from the Royal Dublin Society.

**1985**

The Academy celebrated its bicentenary year with the establishment of the Bicentennial Fund and the publication of its History.

**1994**

Academy House closed for refurbishment. Academy staff were relocated firstly to UCD, Earlsfort Terrace, and later to offices on Mount Street.

The full-text archive of Celtic-Latin Literature was issued on CD, as the first electronic publication to appear under Academy auspices.

**1996**

Academy House was re-opened by the then Taoiseach, Mr John Bruton TD, after completion of refurbishment work (8 February 1996).

**1997**

The Documents on Irish Foreign Policy research and publication project was established in conjunction with the Department of Foreign Affairs and the National Archives of Ireland.

**1998**

The International Association of Theoretical and Applied Limnology Congress attracting 1200 delegates was organised by the National Commission for Hydrobiology (9–14 August). The committee produced three books for the congress: Paul Giller (ed.), *Studies in Irish*

*Limnology*; Christopher Moriarty (ed.), *Studies on Irish Lakes and Rivers*; and Julian Reynolds, *Ireland's Freshwaters*.

*Documents on Irish Foreign Policy*, Vol. 1 was published.

**1999**

The Advisory Committee on Genetic Anthropology proposed the launch of a research project to explore the genetic origins of the Irish people. This was supported financially by the National Millennium Committee.

**2000**

At the request of the Taoiseach, Mr Bertie Ahern TD, the Academy organised a two-day international symposium on 5th and 6th May entitled 'Roger Casement in Irish World History'. The aims of this symposium were first to re-examine and assess our current knowledge of Casement in the context of his life, work and times, and second to set the research agenda of Casement studies for the immediate future.

The Task Force on the Physical Sciences was established by the Department of Education and Science on the recommendation of the Academy.

**2001**

The Third Sector Research Programme was established to fund research into the voluntary sector.

Volume II: Geology of the New Survey of Clare Island was published.

DEPFA BANK plc became the Academy's Conference Sponsor 2002–2006.

Cunningham Medals were awarded to Maurice Craig, Daniel Bradley, David Beers Quinn and Bernard Crossland.

**2002**

Inaugural McCrea Lecture, in honour of relativist, Professor Sir W.H. McCrea, MRIA, given by Sir Martin Rees, Astronomer Royal.

The Irish Council for Bioethics was established at the request of the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment under the chairmanship of Professor Patrick Fottrell, MRIA.

A symposium – *Science and Technology Research: Looking to the Long Term* – was held in Academy House on 1st February 2002.

National Committee for History was established.

The Inaugural Hamilton Lecture was given by Nobel Physicist, Professor Murray Gell-Mann on 16th October.

Conference – *Natural and Cultural Landscapes: The Geological Foundation* (9–11 September)

Conference – *Making Sense of Sellafield* (26 September)

Publication of the first fascicle in the Irish Historic Towns Atlas City Series, No. 11, *Dublin, Part 1 to 1610*.

**2003**

The Tánaiste and Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment, Ms Mary Harney, TD, gave an address to the Academy entitled *Towards a Civic Science: A Mission for the 21st Century* (20 January).