This is the sixteenth in a series of annual Irish Historic Towns Atlas (IHTA) newsletters, intended to keep those associated with the research project, based in the Royal Irish Academy, informed of progress and events. Series editors: Raymond Gillespie, H.B. Clarke, Jacinta Prunty, Michael Potterton; consultant editors: Anngret Simms, J.H. Andrews; cartographic editor: Sarah Gearty; editorial assistants: Angela Murphy, Jennifer Moore, Frank Cullen, Angela Byrne. Maps produced in association with Ordnance Survey Ireland and Land and Property Services Northern Ireland.

**We would like to wish all our authors, contributors, researchers and those interested in the project a very Happy Christmas and prosperous New Year**

**New publications**
The first in our Dublin Suburbs series, *Clontarf* by Colm Lennon, was launched on 6 December 2017 in Academy House by Lord Mayor Mícheál Mac Donncha. Earlier that evening Colm delivered a lecture ‘Clontarf: perspectives on the historic suburb’ to a capacity audience in the Meeting Room. This series, which is supported by Dublin City Council, takes a new format that is innovative yet familiar to the traditional series. For more on the publication see [www.ihta.ie](http://www.ihta.ie).

**Dublin suburbs**
Work has continued on the rest of the atlases in the suburbs series. Production on Rathmines by Séamas Ó Maitíu advanced and research continued on Drumcondra (Ruth McManus), Kilmainham/Inchicore (Frank Cullen) and Ringsend/Irishtown (Jacinta Prunty). The series is edited by Colm Lennon and Jacinta Prunty and part-funded by the Heritage Section of Dublin City Council.

**Research**
With funding from Louth County Council, Drogheda (Ned McHugh) continued production and will be published in 2018. Angela Byrne (Ballyshannon), Michael Byrne (Tullamore), Marc Caball (Tralee), Howard Clarke/Maíre Ní Laoi (Cork), Jonathan Cherry/Brendan Scott (Cavan), Linda Doran (New Ross), John Martin (Dungarvan), Eamon O’Flaherty/Siobhán Sexton (Westport), Jim Rees (Arklow). Other towns in progress are Cahir, Carlow, Cashel, Loughrea, Naas, Newry and Roscommon. We carried out a number of workshops aimed at authors exploring various sources available for urban research. We shall continue these during 2018.

Over the summer months we had two SPUR students from Maynooth University – Roisin Byrne and Jack Flood – who carried out research on various aspects of the project, particularly the Ringsend/Irishtown suburb.

**Public lecture and seminar**
The theme for this year’s seminar was ‘Mapping townscapes: comparative perspectives through the Irish and British Historic Town Atlases’ and took place on 19 May 2017. It was co-organised with Keith Lilley (QUB) in collaboration with the Historic Towns Trust (HTT). Roger Kain (School of Advanced Studies, University of London) delivered a public lecture on ‘Mapping towns through time’ the previous evening to a fully booked Meeting Room in Academy House followed by a short walking tour of Dawson Street led by Frank Cullen. At the seminar, which was supported by the Irish Walled Towns Network of the Heritage Council, the focus was on town surveys and mapping as sources and examples from Galway and Oxford were given in the morning. Current cartographic practices and future directions were compared with samples from the Irish Historic Towns Atlas and the British Historic Towns Atlas were discussed in the afternoon. The seminar concluded with a panel consisting of Colin Bray (OSI), Eamonn Doyle (Esri Ireland), Anngret Simms (European Historic Towns Atlas) and Daniel Stracke (Institute for Comparative Urban History, Münster) under the theme of Mapping townscapes – a comparative perspective. Michael Starrett (Heritage Council) provided some closing remarks.

Next year’s seminar ‘Modernising Townscapes: urban evolution in Ireland and Great Britain from the Reformation to industrialisation, 1540–1840’ will take place on 17 and 18 May 2018 in Academy House. See [www.ihta.ie](http://www.ihta.ie) for the programme in the spring.
News from Europe
Anngret Simms, Sarah Gearty and Jacinta Prunty spoke at the annual meeting of the International Commission for the History of Towns (ICHT) in Cracow under the theme ‘Political functions of urban spaces through the ages’ in September and in October Anngret Simms travelled to Vienna to speak at a conference ‘Towns as living spaces: static and dynamic aspects of urban topography’. The list of published European atlases continues to grow in numbers exceeding 530 across Europe and can be accessed in the European Project section of the website. (https://www.ria.ie/research-projects/irish-historic-towns-atlas/european-project).

IHTA Digital
The IHTA Digital Working Group met twice during 2017 to progress elements of the digital areas of the project. Sarah Gearty and Rachel Murphy attended a workshop in Münster on ‘GIS-based cartography – a change of media or a change of paradigms for Historic Towns Atlases’ where 30 participants travelled from 11 different countries to partake. The Digital Atlas of Galway that includes 188 sites in GIS was launched by Eamonn Doyle (Esri Ireland) and Colin Bray (OSI). Collaboration continued with OSI where sources from Map Genie and GeoHive were shared. The mapping of Drogheda 1:2500 commenced using ArcGIS.

IHTA Online
The first 25 towns atlases are now available freely online, thanks to the scanning of the atlases by Eneclann (The Irish Family History Centre). Due to copyright, not all maps and illustrations are available. As a rich resource of urban history and growth, IHTA Online has been widely availed of all year. Atlases are divided thematically into Towns of monastic origin, Towns of Viking origin, Towns of Anglo-Norman origin, Early modern, Gaelic and plantation towns, Towns in the eighteenth century and Towns in the nineteenth century along with the relevant chapters from Reading the maps by Jacinta Prunty and Howard Clarke (2013). A series of expert essays by Anngret Simms, Howard Clarke, Michael Potterton, Raymond Gillespie and Colm Lennon are also available online giving further insight into the historical periods of urban development. To access this resource https://www.ria.ie/irish-historic-towns-atlas-online. We are members of the Digital Repository of Ireland (www.dri.ie) and will be making digital versions of the atlas available there for digital preservation in 2018. IHTA Online will also constitute a layer under Archaeology and Architecture on the very expansive research tool www.heritagemaps.ie.

Atlas activities
Sarah Gearty and Rachel Murphy gave a joint paper at the All-Ireland Architectural Research Group in Waterford on ‘Re-thinking Historical Urban Landscapes: a digital approach’. Sarah also participated in a round table discussion on ‘Public urban histories in Ireland’ at the Irish Modern Urban History Group symposium and brought the atlas into the classroom at Scoil Mhuire Marino. Jennifer Moore delivered a series of 4 workshops to Dublin City Librarians on how to use the atlas and pointers for library readers. Jacinta Prunty lectured on ‘People on the move: evidence for migration from the IHTA’ at the Mellon Centre for Migration Studies in Omagh and spoke at the Galway City Heritage Conference and at the National Libraries of Wales conference on the Galway atlas. Anngret spoke about the European project at ‘The Medieval town in Ireland in the light of recent archaeological excavations’ that was convened by Michael Potterton. Howard Clarke spoke about Dublin in the Transit Gateway Project. Sarah and Frank welcomed over 1200 people to the Academy and had a display of atlas material for Culture Night.

Atlas team
Founding editor and Kells author, Anngret Simms stepped away from the Editorial Board, after 36 years of innovation and progression, to become Consultant Editor. At a special Board Meeting in March in the Headfort Arms, Kells, Raymond Gillespie, Howard Clarke, Jacinta Prunty, Sarah Gearty, Jennifer Moore, Frank Cullen and former Cartographic Editor, Mary Davies, reminisced and paid tribute to Anngret’s tireless atlas work. John Andrews sent his well wishes and the meeting was followed by a walking tour of Kells lead by Anngret. Michael Potterton also officially joined the editorial board in January.