Future paths
Nicholas Canny reflects on the Academy’s evolving role

Innovation Ireland
Tom Brazil assesses the Report of the Innovation Taskforce

Eurosciences Biennale Open Forum
Peter Mitchell looks to opportunities ahead as Dublin becomes European City of Science in 2012

Quote/unquote
Michael Cronin argues for critical thinking

A vision for astronomy and astrophysics in Ireland
David Fegan traces the journey of the cosmos from the Big Bang

On the shelf
9-volume Dictionary of Irish Biography
Contents

- Key Achievements 2009–10 p2
- President’s Report—Future paths: on the Academy’s evolving role p4
- Secretary’s Report—Innovation Ireland: the Report of the Innovation Taskforce p8
- Science Secretary’s Report—Eurosciences Biennale Open Forum—Dublin’s opportunity p11
- PL&A Secretary’s Report—Quote/unquote—on critical thinking p16
- Senior Vice-President’s Report—A vision for astronomy and astrophysics in Ireland p20
- New Members p24
- Distinctions conferred on Members p31
- Bereavements p32
- Academy Committees Report p38
- Competitive measures—on Craig Barrett’s Academy address p42
- The Future Role of the University in a Changing World p45
- A Year in View p47
- Research Projects p54
- Art and Architecture of Ireland (AAI) p54
- Dictionary of Irish Biography (DIB) p56
- Dictionary of Medieval Latin from Celtic Sources (DMLCS) p58
- Digital Humanities Observatory (DHO) p60
- Documents on Irish Foreign Policy (DIFP) p61
- Foclóir na Nua-Ghaeilge (FNG) p62
- Irish Historic Towns Atlas (IHTA) p64
- Library Report p66
- Mobility, Grants p76
- Appendices p77
Key Achievements
2009/10

- Dictionary of Irish Biography (With Cambridge University Press), 9 volumes, 9,700 lives, over 2,000 years of history, available online, edited by James McGuire and James Quinn
- Irish Historic Towns Atlas, no. 21, Limerick by Eamon O’Flaherty; and no. 22, Longford by Sarah Gearty, Martin Morris and Fergus O’Ferrall
- Dublin 1610 to 1756: The making of the early modern city by Colin Lennon
- Conspiracy: Irish political trials (in conjunction with an RTÉ Radio 1 series) by Myles Dungan
- Judging Lemass: The measure of the man by Tom Garvin
- 8th Scientific Statement: Market-based policies for reducing carbon dioxide emissions
- Reports: The future of graduate education in chemistry and physics and ensuring integrity in Irish research: A discussion document
- Celebrating Thinking, a series of panel discussions
- The Future Role of the Public Intellectual, a panel discussion
- Competitiveness, a public lecture by Craig Barrett, former chairman and CEO of Intel
- Carbon Capture and Storage: Bridging the Transition from Fossil Fuels to Renewables, International Geosciences Committee conference in Dublin Castle
- Treasures of the Royal Irish Academy, a library exhibition
- Threats to the Environment, a lecture series
This, my third and final presidential address, provides me with an opportunity to ponder whether, under my stewardship, the Academy has remained true to the course I charted for it at the outset of my tenure, and to point to some possible fresh undertakings. In my first report, for 2007–8, I made the case for the Academy being a ‘university for the universities’, by which I meant it could provide a forum for the critical self-examination that, for a variety of reasons, is happening less frequently within universities. Apart from their quotidian involvement with teaching and administration, academics are increasingly preoccupied with individual and interinstitutional competition, internal and interinstitutional restructuring, and incessantly drafting funding applications, especially to sustain research.

As I reflect on our endeavours since March 2008 I believe that the Academy has indeed become a voice for the universities in two respects. First, it has sponsored specific (and thankfully well-attended) public lectures on the multifarious challenges facing universities today. It has also led investigations of subjects relevant to Ireland’s more general wellbeing, frequently in association with partner bodies. In this second category I recall having attended conferences on topics as varied as carbon capture and storage, Ireland’s energy requirements, research integrity, and key performance indicators appropriate to humanities disciplines, among others. Attention has also been given, by the Academy and its Committees, to how vulnerable entrants to the university are being prepared at school for that progression, and to perceived academic deficits at school level particularly in the teaching of mathematics and modern languages.

Future paths

Academy President Professor Nicholas Canny looks at the Academy’s evolving role as a forum during challenging times
Many such debates have been reported on extensively in the public media, where Academy positions are sometimes identified as inputs to reforms or initiatives favoured by government. All such mention is welcome, not least because the Academy relies for its support on the public purse, and is therefore as anxious as every other publicly-funded body to be seen to be contributing to the resolution of the country’s current difficulties. However, while the Academy is happy to advocate relevant government policies of which it approves, it frequently alludes to the complexities of the policies being promulgated, not least because complexity is not usually favoured by political figures and/or media reporteurs anxious to command the attention of a general audience for a few fleeting moments. For example, while the Academy, like many other opinion-formers, calls regularly on the government to sustain research funding in the interest of having Ireland enjoy a share in the wealth that accrues from the advancement of knowledge, it insists that advances in knowledge come incrementally rather than in a fiscal, and, regardless of discipline, in the absence of intelligent reflection upon the close observation and testing of a wide range of data. The Academy also differs from less critical proponents of the knowledge society when it regards the channeling of research investment into narrowly defined areas. It considers this particularly dubious where the stated intention is to anticipate where innovation is likely to be achieved, rather than to inform researchers in Ireland of scientific breakthroughs that have been accomplished elsewhere.

Consistent with the Academy’s position, the country faces an imminent crisis because a quick shift from fossil sources to renewable energy sources is not feasible, either financially or technologically. While the Academy, in its inputs and opinions on such debates frequently alludes to complexity and uncertainty where simplicity might have wider appeal, it also regularly challenges obturation and lack of moral courage, especially where freedom of research inquiry is being hampered by unclear guidelines from government and other external agencies. Such issues arise most frequently in relation to biomedical research where ethical and legal guidelines are unclear and where government, and various pressure groups, would seem to prefer not to have uncertainties clarified by the courts. The preference for having issues left open is not confined to the biomedical domain; however, researchers investigating how Ireland’s interests (including its economic and environmental interests) might best be upheld when meeting its energy needs, also find that open inquiry is not always being encouraged. On this issue, insufficient attention is being given to the fact that Ireland’s heavy reliance upon imported fossil fuels to meet its energy requirements leaves the country uniquely vulnerable from economic, security and environmental perspectives. Our researchers, like most commentators, would have the country make increased use of renewable energy sources, but, unlike commentators, they recognize that the country faces an imminent crisis because a quick shift from fossil sources to renewable energy sources is not feasible, either financially or technologically. Most investment so far in this area has been in wind energy, with some support being given to research on how biomass and waves can be used for electricity generation.

If we are to be guided by the experience of Denmark, however—which has invested a staggering amount in energy research, but can still only meet 25 per cent of its energy needs from wind power—these sources alone will be insufficient to resolve the acute problem that we face. Therefore, if Ireland is to achieve a rapid de-escalation of its reliance on fossil fuels, and meet its international obligations to reduce CO2 emissions, it must promote research also in solar energy. Moreover, I believe that Ireland should no longer close its mind to considering the possibilities presented by downsized nuclear power stations appropriate to smaller countries, given the relevant technological research that is ongoing internationally. Principle can no longer be invoked to justify a seeming reluctance to support such research, given that much of the electricity that we plan to purchase for our national grid is being generated in the large nuclear power stations of other countries.

Although I can point to many instances where the Academy has adopted a critical stance concerning national research strategy or university policy, I remain concerned that we, as a learned society, are much less active than our counterparts in Britain (and here I have particularly in mind the Royal Society and the British Academy) in seeking to influence educational provision at school. I consider this reluctance to have serious implications, given that the choice of subjects and instruction at both secondary schools determines the level of preparedness of matriculating pupils for university instruction. The Academy, as I mentioned, has offered critical comment on the provision being made for the teaching of mathematics and modern languages at secondary (but not at primary) school, and the Academy’s Chemical and Physical Sciences Committee has recently sought to identify the schools in Ireland in which the teaching of chemistry and physics to higher level further students persist, and to acquire some understanding of the quality of the home and physical provision being made for the teaching of these subjects. A perceived academic drift in these disciplines at school prompts all of these actions, and Minister for Education and Skills Mary Coughlan, TD, responding to pressure from a variety of sources, has conceded that students presenting for higher-level mathematics at final school examinations will henceforth be awarded bonus points. Even as this pronouncement was being made (and the Academy has long advocated bonus points for mathematics, albeit against my stated objections), Academy Members were asking how this device will encourage a greater number of capable pupils to opt for higher-level mathematics, and questions are also being raised concerning the implications of privileging mathematics over other cognate subjects, notably physics and chemistry. Such misgivings, I would suggest, point to the need for the Academy to sponsor a more general discussion on university admissions, one that will extend to the question of proficiency in which subjects on which the school curriculum and mastery of what skills should be taken into account when assessing candidates for admission to what will always be a limited number of university places. Any such discussion, leading possibly to a distinction between a university entrance examination and a school-leaving examination, may leave the Academy open to the charge of favouring elitism. However, sponsoring such a debate might also bring this Academy, like its counterparts in Britain, closer to a wider community, and closer also to accepting that what happens academically at school has major implications for what might be attempted academically at university.
The importance of ‘innovation’ is increasingly evident in public policy discussions in Ireland and elsewhere. It is a concept that is sometimes difficult to define with precision but is in general associated with new ways of doing things, leading to an economic or social return. As academic research involves the discovery and dissemination of new knowledge, there is naturally perceived to be a close link between innovation and academic research. Even so, the optimal way in which this connection works can be elusive to identify. Sometimes a great deal of research, even over a long timescale, can be carried out with little immediate impact on innovation, while at the same time some radical innovation can take place without any obvious research input (for example, the Boston software model). Nevertheless, experience in innovative locations such as Silicon Valley demonstrates the critical role that universities often play in driving and supporting innovation.

In its medium-term economic strategy published in December 2008, the government identified as one key action the development of Ireland as an international innovation hub. The Report of the Innovation Taskforce produced in March 2010 is intended to create a roadmap for how this is to be achieved. It is a long report of some 122 pages, with numerous recommendations and with a jargon of its own—terms such as ‘reflection point’, ‘step-change’, ‘ecosystems’ make repeated appearances. The Royal Irish Academy made a submission to the Taskforce in September 2009. The following summarises the main recommendations of the Taskforce Report and then offers some comments on and analysis of its conclusions relating to research and education, which are of primary interest to Academy Members.

The vision that the Taskforce sets out for Ireland in 2020 is of an innovative, high-wage, export-led economy hosting research intensive multinational companies of global significance, some Irish-owned, accompanied by thousands of innovative smaller companies. It sets out to place the entrepreneur and enterprise at the centre of its thinking. The main themes of its analysis and recommendations focus, but not on the need for continued public investment in research and development, including an updated strategy for science, technology and innovation (STI) for 2014–20, but with some new emphases, including improved agency coordination and greater resources for applied research that is focused on identified priority opportunities for industry in Ireland. This is linked to several recommendations connected to the education system at every level (including higher education); these are discussed further below. A second theme is the effective management of intellectual property (IP), as existing arrangements are seen as deficient in several respects. Indeed, an opportunity is identified for Ireland to become an International Innovation Services Centre (similar to the International Financial Services Centre), specialising in IP management and dispute resolution, for instance.

The Taskforce Report devotes considerable attention to the financial side of growing and developing innovative enterprises, as international experience shows that this is a key ingredient for success. It sees a transformation needed in the scale and nature of the Irish venture capital system and recommends various new funding instruments and ‘business angel’ arrangements. Further themes forming the basis for a series of recommendations include the use of public procurement to stimulate innovation, the need for improved broadband infrastructure, a move towards better product design within Irish companies, a change in cultural attitudes to innovation and entrepreneurship (including reform of personal bankruptcy legislation) and a consistent marketing overseas of the innovation message in relation to Ireland by agencies and government.

In the context of education, the Taskforce Report recognises a crucial link between innovation and education and emphasises the need for encouraging creativity and problem-solving skills throughout the education system. At primary and secondary school level the Report is particularly exercised by evidence of weakness in mathematical attainment and recommends measures be taken to address this (including the possible award of bonus points for higher-level mathematics in the Leaving Certificate). The special role of the higher-education system in promoting innovation is acknowledged, partly through its traditional mission of education and research, but there is also much emphasis on increased industry interaction and prioritisation of entrepreneurship within education as well as on taking account of commercialisation trackrecords within academic recruitment, promotion and reward. The Taskforce Report is enthusiastic about recent university alliances and acknowledges the important complementary contribution that the arts,
Eurosciences is a pan-European association committed to creating a more vibrant European scientific identity and dynamic, from the ground up. It represents European scientists of all disciplines (natural sciences, mathematics, medical sciences, engineering, social sciences, humanities and the arts), institutions of the public sector, universities, research institutes and the business and industrial sector. Membership is open to a broad spectrum of professionals, engineers, industrialists and generally to any citizen interested in science and technology and its links with society.

Eurosciences Biennale
Open Forum

... in this time of serious national economic distress the higher-education system has a critical role in moving Ireland forward to a new and sustainable model of economic and social development.

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ESOF is Euroscience’s flagship event, it was first held in 2004 in Stockholm, followed biennially by Munich, Barcelona and this year, at the splendid Lingotto Congress Centre in Turin. In 2012, Dublin, hosting leaders on determinism and errors from other European cities, will host the next in the ESOF series of the new National Convention Centre overlooking the River Liffey. The EOC faces the Local Organising Committee for ESOF2012—chaired by a Member of this Academy, Professor Patrick Cunningham (Chief Scientific Adviser to the Irish government)—is formidable, not least at the time of severe budgetary calls. Professor Cunningham and his team must surely afford the maximum possible support from the Irish scientific and technological community in the run to July 2012.

The Academy is acutely aware of the opportunity that ESOF2012 offers to showcase European and Irish science and technology to a largely Irish audience and to demonstrate the wider cultural links between the sciences and the humanities—indeed, to emphasise that science is an intrinsically cultural activity in and of itself. To this end, Council has set up an Academy sub-committee to construct ideas and advice on events and initiatives that the Academy could support from within the framework of ESOF2012. All chairpersons and programme managers of Academy sub-committees have similarly been alerted.

ESOF is not simply a scientific conference. The format consists of a forum for discussion of topical issues and interdisciplinary interaction; an embedded conference and exhibition; an outreach programme with many events (cultural, scientific and social) throughout the host city, and various satellite events, complemented by site visits. In Turin’s case, the latter included research centres such as CERN, Centro Ricercate Fis. (CIF) and Thales Alenia Space (a satellite design and production facility), and cultural centres like the Villa della Regina, a UNESCO listed World Heritage Site whose advanced sensor technology is applied in the preservation of cultural heritage, and the Torino Royal Library, whose priceless works by Leonardo da Vinci are exhibited, including the world-famous self-portrait and the Codex on the Flight of Birds.

At Turin, the scientific programme at the heart of the event comprised a rich mix of plenary and keynote lectures by celebrated international personalities—noted not only for their scientific preeminence, but also for their communication skills—and a large number of sessions delivered by other distinguished figures, learning seminar, workshops and debates on the latest in various fields of knowledge. The active participation of free Public lectures added immeasurably to the occasion.

10 themes for debate and discussion were chosen in advance by the Programme Committee, namely:

- sustainable living and moving;
- evolution, development and adaptation of organisms;
- moving into and up from our quantum world;
- responding to global needs;
- frontiers in energy research;
- science, knowledge and belief;
- memory and learning in organisms;
- languages, culture and variability;
- integrating science with health care; and, finally, policy: what follows?

It is not possible in a short piece such as this to give but a flavour of the nature and diversity of the plenary and keynote lectures and sessions presented in the course of the week in Turin. Suffice to mention that audiences were treated to many memorable presentations, including, for example, ‘Quantum information and the foundations of quantum mechanics,’ by Anton Zeilinger (Professor of Quantum Optics, University of Vienna). Professor Zeilinger pointedly addressed that although research in the field of quantum information science only commenced in the 1970s, it was not motivated by a search for applications, but rather by pure curiosity.

One is reminded of the views of the brilliant Leighlinbridge-born physicist of the nineteenth century, John Tyndall, on what is usually referred to today as ‘pure research’, that it [science] must be cultivated for its own sake, for the pure love of truth, rather than for the applause or profit that it brings... That scientific discovery may put... millions [of dollars] into the pockets of makers, the history of science simply proves, but the hope of doing so never was, and it never can be, the motive power of the investigator.

Today, by contrast, the focus has shifted to accelerating the innovation process and bringing research more quickly to market, with a view to creating sustainable growth and high-skilled jobs. There are those who fear that the pendulum may have swung too far and that the anticipated spin-out may not be achieved in the short term, leading to disenchantment among decision-makers and to a decline in the public’s appreciation of the intrinsic value of scientific research.

Other presentations delivered at Turin that captured attention or challenged conventional wisdom included ‘The nature of human altruism’, by Ernst Fehr (Institute for Empirical Economics, University of Zurich)."
Irish science at ESOF 2010

Irish science was well represented at ESOF 2010. The importance of a strong Irish presence on the ground in Turin was communicated widely, well in advance, by the Office of the Chief Scientist. The response of Irish researchers and state organisations was gratifying, with no less than 8 of 140 scientific sessions organised by scientists with an Irish affiliation. Moreover, the European Young Researcher Award at ESOF 2010 was won by Ibrahim Darran Brennan, a post-doctoral Research Fellow at the LCD Conway Institute and specialist in analobics and genetics at the Coombe Women and Maternal University Hospital (Dublin). The award acknowledges Brennan's work on the identification and validation of breast cancer associated biomarkers, and his strong motivation to translate this research into clinical reality.

It would be remiss not to mention the initiative by the ESOF2012 team (in partnership with the Irish Tourism Authority, Dublin City Civic Authority and Discover Science and Engineering) in organising a Science Communication Bus, staffed by six young Irish ‘Science Ambassadors’ briefed to field questions about the culture and heritage of their country, which travelled from Dublin to Turin as part of the build up to the event. Minister for Science, Technology and InnovationConor Lenihan, T.D., also took time to visit the Lingotto Centre, and to host a reception at the Circolo dei Lettori within the splendid Baroque-style Palazzo Grassi, to celebrate Dublin’s hosting of the next ESOF (City of Science) meeting.

At the close of ESOF2010, Euroscience issued a declaration urging the European Union, through the European Commission, to make determined efforts to sustain investment in research and innovation, in order to help Europe regain its leadership role in science and return to centre stage in a rapidly evolving and highly competitive world. Failure to act, it was asserted, would see Europe lose out to its traditional competitors and to emerging economies in Asia and South America. Hopefully the message will be widely digested, as it already appears to have been in Germany, where Chancellor Angela Merkel has made clear her government’s intention to reduce Germany’s large current budget deficit, though not at the expense of investment in research and innovation.1

In a ceremony attended by Dublin’s new lord mayor, Councillor Gerry Breen, and the deputy mayor of Turin, Tom de Alessandri, the ESOF ‘baton’ was then formally passed to Dublin, which now takes up the challenge.

ESOF2010 was an undoubted success, with feedback overall being highly positive, not least in respect of the outreach programme ‘Science in the City’. One had only to experience the atmosphere of youthful enthusiasm and engagement within the Lingotto Centre and Turin in general to concur. The few adverse comments expressed were confined to the business/industrial sector, one or two of whom questioned the return on their investment in the event, and the rally, some of whom lamented the paucity, as they saw it, of major ‘breaking news’ stories.

The event attracted 4,200 attendees—half of whom were under 35 years of age, 400 accredited journalists and almost 800 speakers and exhibitors. In addition, an estimated 75,000 visitors participated in the spectacular ‘Science in the City’ programme, which so enhanced the city’s earnings. Much credit must go to Enric Banda (Euroscience President) and Enrico Predazzi (Chair, ESOF2010 Steering Committee), together with their fellow Committee members, executive team and host of friendly and welcoming volunteers.

In conclusion, ESOF2012 offers an excellent opportunity to remind Ireland’s young citizens of their proud scientific heritage and to stimulate greater public awareness of, and interest in, science and its vital role in the ongoing enrichment of the human experience. The Academy looks forward with anticipation to the next ESOF meeting in Dublin in July 2012 and intends to play an active role in helping to make it, too, a highly successful event.

1 Shortly after the report was written, the European Commissioner for Research, Innovation and Science, Máire Geoghegan-Quinn, announced the largest single investment (€6.4 billion) in research and innovation in the history of the European Union under the Seventh Framework Programme. The Irish government had already announced the largest single investment in research ever made in the State’s history, with €359 million earmarked for physical infrastructure and research projects under the Programme for Research in Third level Institutions (PRTLI Cycle 5, 2011-16).
NEW PLA SECRETARY PROFESSOR MICHAEL CROHN reflects on the importance of critical thinking when a Smart Society is needed to make a Smart Economy.

During the student unrest of the 1960s, one of the slogans shouted at a lecturer in the University of Heidelberg was ‘Hier wird nicht zitiert!’ ‘No quoting here!’ Only original thought should be taught in the universities, the students argued; quoting the ideas or works of others was a ready admission of defeat, an acknowledgment that one was more ventriloquist than seer. As Alberto Manguel has noted, however, the students were forgetting that to quote is to continue a conversation from the past in order to give context to the present, to quote is to reflect on what has been said before, and unless we do that, we speak in a vacuum where no human voice can make a sound.

In times of economic recession and severe cutbacks, the danger is that yesterday’s student slogan becomes today’s policy prescription. No quoting of useless knowledge here, because this is not what the economy needs. John F. Kennedy became the model of the unthinking, unreflecting politician. The threat is not to decline in a highly instrumentalized view of science and technology becomes the only conceivable paradigm for investment in education and research. Such a view is not only questionable in terms of its own economic rationale towards a genuine challenge to the very democratic basis of the societies that permit such policies. A fundamental feature of a democratic democratic society is the search for empathy. One of the duties of a citizen in a democracy is to learn what it is to be someone not like oneself and to become aware of the importance of empathy. It can involve something as simple as the way we design entrances to our public buildings, the way we design railway stations and the way we design our streets. In a world of global interdependence, where the needs of people we will never actually meet are being fulfilled by people we will never actually meet, the need for empathy is not only global but local. The capacity to empathize and understand the fine, the subtle and the historical experiences of others is crucial to the creation of sustainable human communities where citizens can remain equal in their differences. What our response of tolerance, not typically in these terms. A particular group—the disabled, in recent years—suffering an acquired right of equal citizenship as a result of more inclusive forms of sympathy. Currently, empathy, particularly in education, legislation and practice, are seen as undermining democratic norms because they tally with the sympathy to privileged groups in society. A simplified contribution of the
research. In one sense, paradoxically, the problem of recognition is to do with exposure, but of the wrong kind. If one takes a typical daily broadsheet, approximately 95 per cent of the content—from articles on public sector reform, to car accidents, to foreign affairs reports, to columns on personal finances and law matters—covers areas that are properly the domain of HSS disciplines such as sociology, political science, legal studies, sociology and psychology. However, being everywhere is in reality being nowhere. Whereas specific science or science and technology pages explicitly identify the existence of scientific inquiry and can make a connection between various forms of research and identifiable outcomes, no such coherent or recognisable platform exists for HSS research. The very diffuseness of its effects internally weakens rather than strengthens its case for support.

Further evidence of this relative invisibility is general media indifference to the very significant publishing output of HSS researchers. Aside from a clutch of titles in history and literary biography, the vast majority of publications produced by HSS scholars working in Ireland are ignored by the print and broadcast media. Just to take publishing houses based in Ireland—An Clóchomhar, Blackstaff Publishing, Cork University Press, Four Courts Press, Irish Academic Press, Lilliput Press, Cork Time Press, Queen’s University Press, UCD Press—how many titles on their lists will receive anything like adequate attention or commentary? In the mid-1960s less than one per cent of the 22 per cent of children who did the Leaving Certificate examination went on to university. By the beginning of the new century almost 60 per cent of school leavers in Ireland went on to enter third-level education. For four decades there has been a continued and welcome rise in the educational attainment of the population, both North and South. The island has never had such a large number of educated people, and the figures continue to rise. Despite continued concerns over access, the government has welcomed this development as part of a larger commitment to transform Ireland into a ‘knowledge society’. Just as the educational levels of the country are rising and we are being asked to become an active and integral part of an increasingly complex knowledge environment, the response of the broadcast and print media has been to maintain a studied indifference to a substantial part of the country’s intellectual infrastructure. As people become more educated, it becomes less popular to take their education seriously.

The philosopher Martha Nussbaum in her recent work, Not for profit: why democracy needs the humanities, speaks of the type of education presupposed by democratic self-governance. The type of citizen required is:

an active, critical, reflective and empathetic member of a community of equals, capable of exchanging ideas on the basis of respect and understanding with people from many different backgrounds.

A vibrant, autonomous, critical humanities and social sciences culture is vital to the democratic future of Ireland. Otherwise, we will be left with Manguel’s vacuum where the human voice will be forever silenced.

1 Martha C. Nussbaum, Not for profit: why democracy needs the humanities (Princeton, NJ, 2010), 141.
Astronomy appeals to something deep within the human psyche. On a truly grand scale it facilitates mankind’s innate curiosity to seek scientific answers concerning the matter and energy content of the Universe and how cosmic order and structure has emerged since the cosmos expanded from the primordial Big Bang about 15 billion years ago. It also seeks to answer deep questions about time, space, galaxies, stars, planetary systems and cosmic radiation. It poses fundamental philosophical questions about humanity’s place in the Universe and whether or not we are unique or whether other civilizations exist. It also cautions us concerning the importance of recognising that anthropomorphic thinking may be deeply embedded in our scientific methodology and reasoning.

Though not always intuitively obvious, the societal impact of astronomy is immense. Few human experiences are as profoundly moving as observing the Milky Way (the plane of our galaxy seen side-on), from a dark site without any unaided optical pollution in the background. We owe almost all of our energy resources, indirectly to the nuclear fusion processes that occur deep within the Sun. Assuming we could collect and harness it, the radiant solar energy received by the Earth every second would be sufficient to satisfy humanity’s energy needs, 10,000 times over. Solar activity, coupled with the complexities of the Earth’s orbit, plays a significant long-term role in climate change. Astronomy and navigation have for centuries been linked, never more so than at the present time, as a network of global positioning satellites (GPS) offers peerless accuracy in determining absolute position on the Earth’s surface to an accuracy of a few metres.

Our perspective of the Universe and how it works is constantly being updated through a plethora of astronomical observations; through theorising and computer modelling and simulation. Up to the end of the 1960s, our knowledge and understanding of the cosmos was based almost exclusively on evidence gathered by optical and radio telescopes, which painstakingly mapped the skies in a quest to map ever deeper into space and consequently our own past back in time, from the present epoch of cosmic evolution. Today, astronomy is no longer simply an observational science based on discovery using visible light and radio waves. Fifty years on from the birth of what is euphemistically called the ‘space age’, we now possess the technological capability to observe and study the cosmos through a variety of alternative complementary observational ‘windows’. With the development of the microchip and allied digital technologies (computers, electronic memory, navigational systems, etc.), placing astronomical instruments on board orbiting spacecraft has become commonplace, albeit at significant financial cost. The astronomical community is now empowered to search for new astrophysical phenomena through alternative observational ‘windows’ such as the infrared, X-ray and Gamma-ray parts of the electromagnetic spectrum. In addition, sophisticated new projects are currently under development to search for more exotic forms of cosmic messengers, such as cosmic neutrinos and gravitational waves. Much of contemporary research involves the active collaboration of the theoretical and observational astronomers, astrophysicists and space scientists, as traditional distinctions between the various practitioners diminish.

During the past decade and a half, both ground-based and space-based experimentation have enabled fantastic progress to be made, with stunning new discoveries in Galactic and extragalactic astronomy and also in cosmology. Worldwide, as the community strives for bigger, better and more sensitive instruments, progress is predicated on collaboration and the use of centralised facilities where many state-of-the-art instruments may be concentrated.

Astronomy, a science that has brought the secrets of the Universe to our fingertips, has a long and illustrious history. Ireland has a long and illustrious tradition in astronomy. At present, virtually all Irish universities participate in research and offer extensive undergraduate and postgraduate courses as well as postgraduate training. The Royal Irish Academy’s Committee for Astronomy and Space Sciences is the main interface between the International Astronomical Union and the community of Irish astronomers, astrophysicists and space scientists. Membership is drawn from across the whole island and is open to interested parties from all over Ireland.
of Ireland, with representation reflecting all major professional stakeholders as well as amateur astronomers. With the objective of planning a coherent strategy for the future of Irish research in astronomy and astrophysics, and with particular emphasis on the absolutely necessary of accessing major international facilities, a more than ad hoc, but a subgroup of the Committee has drawn up a plan for consideration by government. Titled ‘National plan of the astronomical community in Ireland: a vision for astronomy and astrophysics in Ireland, 2010–2020’, this important document formulates a visionary blueprint for the next decade, with strong emphasis on establishing full membership of ESO as a top priority. In addition to these access to some of the world’s best observational facilities and latest technology at the superb viewing site in Chile, ESO membership comes with a comprehensive package of facilities and educational support, outreach programs and economic inputs. The decadal plan, inspired by similar documents drawn up in Denmark, the Netherlands, Germany and the UK, reflects what needs to be done nationally in order to both collaborate and compete with the very best institutions across the globe.

Complementary to facilitating this decadal vision, the Academy is also examining the benefits that might accrue from engaging with the ASPERA consortium. ASPERA is a European network of national government agencies responsible for coordinating and funding national research efforts in astroparticle physics. ASPERA started in July 2006 and has been extended for another three years from 2009. The main achievements of ASPERA4 are the development of the European strategy for astroparticle physics and the preparation of a roadmap for this research field. Furthermore, ASPERA hosts interdisciplinary activities spanning environmental sciences and research and development cooperation with SMEs (small to medium enterprises) in Europe.

Given the fundamental importance of astrophysical research and the high public interest in that discipline, the astrophysical community is ever mindful of the importance and utility of the subject in contributing to graduate and postgraduate training through its very strong basis in mathematics, physics, computer, modelling, simulation and instrumentation. Despite the worldwide downturn in recruitment of talented students into physics and engineering, many talented young people have continued, in large numbers, to pursue research careers in astronomy, astrophysics and particle physics. The absolutely fundamental nature of many of the unresolved questions in these disciplines serves to attract the best and the brightest students and acts as a catalyst for even broader scientific enquiry and research. Highly trained as problem-solvers with analytical, numerical and computational expertise and skills, many PhDs subsequently seek professional careers contributing to knowledge-intensive economies across a broad spectrum of scientific activities.

The past 25 years (but particularly the first decade of this century) has proved to be one of the most exciting and productive ever for astrophysics. Aside from fantastic advances individually in astronomy, cosmology and particle physics, synthesis of many of the new results presents new and even more challenging questions, of which a few are worthy of highlighting here.

1. Cosmological studies inform us that normal matter (visible radiating stars and galaxies) comprises only 5% of the total mass of the Universe. Approximately 23% of the mass is attributed to dark matter (hidden and invisible to observation), which would itself only through the influence of gravitational attraction. The other 72% dominant component of the Universe’s mass is now considered to be attributable to a mysterious ‘dark energy’, which is hypothesised to explain the fact that the rate at which the Universe is expanding may itself be accelerating! This enigmatic component is thought to be a critical determinant in the long-term evolution of the Universe and may ultimately dictate its fate. Many experiments are being planned or are under development in order to search for cosmic signatures of these exotic contributions to the overall inventory of the Universe. The stylised image below depicts the relative proportions of visible (coloured) and invisible (black) matter in our Universe (image courtesy of Fermilab).

2. Galaxies pose many fundamental questions. As we look further and further into deep space with ever more powerful telescopes, we observe galaxies at earlier and earlier epochs of time, far earlier observation of younger and younger stellar systems. Many deep questions are posed. How will the early generation of stars evolve? Were stars formed before the first galactic component? How do supermassive black holes form at the centres of galaxies and how do they grow?

3. The recent observation of exo-planets has become a hot-topic in experimental astronomy. Exo-planets are planets that have been detected in orbit around nearby stars other than our own sun. The observations are made from the Earth’s surface by using sensitive telescopes and spectrometric techniques, and at the time of writing, in access of 460 exo-planets have been discovered. Most of these discovered to date are ‘giant’ equivalent to Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus and Neptune in our own solar system. While the field is still at the infancy stage, it is a very important development and one that could lead to whether or not such objects might support life forms. Naturally, the discovery has renewed speculation concerning the possible existence of intelligent life elsewhere in the Universe.

A vision for the Irish astronomical community is to undertake world-class research on these and other fundamental contemporary questions, within the framework of a coherent national plan underpinned by membership of ESO and ASPERA and supporting competitive agency funding.

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New Members

Jane Grimson is Professor of Computer Science and Head of the Department of Computer Science at Trinity College Dublin, a founding member of the Centre for Health Informatics at TCD and Chairperson of the Irish Research Council for Science Engineering and Technology. Her research has covered a broad range of topics in the areas of knowledge and data management, focusing on the development of advanced information systems to improve the efficiency, effectiveness and safety of healthcare. Professor Grimson’s current research is in the area of electronic healthcare records and patient integration.

Alan Jones is Senior Professor and Head of the Geophysics Section in the Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies. He is a world leader in the use of the magnetotelluric method to probe the Earth’s crust by recording its response to naturally occurring electromagnetic fields. This technique offers a complementary technique to Seismic Studies, and Professor Jones has used it to yield new insights into the deep structures underlying regions as diverse as the Canadian shield plateau and the Himalayan plateau.

Martin Mathieu obtained his doctorate and Privatdozent from the University of Tübingen in Germany and is now a reader in the Department of Mathematics at Queen’s University Belfast. He spent periods as a lecturer and researcher in mathematics in many universities in Europe and North America. His research areas are that part of pure mathematics called functional analysis, and he is a world authority on the theory of local multiplicative algebras. Dr Mathieu’s research encompasses a diversity of techniques and results from many areas of algebra and analysis. He extensively promotes mathematical research through conference organisation and journal editorship.

Malachy McCann has been a teacher and researcher in the Department of Chemistry at the National University of Ireland, Maynooth since 1983. His research background is in synthetic coordination chemistry and assessing the therapeutic potential of complexes as metal-based pharmaceutical agents. Drawing on his background as a synthetic and structural coordination chemist, he has employed metal complexes as catalysts for organic transformations, salen polymers and also metalloenzyme mimetics. Recently, Dr McCann prepared and screened potential new drug candidates for use in the areas of antimalarial and anti-cancer chemotherapy.

Eoin O’Reilly is Research Professor of Photonics at the Tyndall National Institute and at University College Cork. He directs a world-leading group whose interests span from fundamental semiconductor physics through to the engineering of semiconductor lasers. He is widely recognised for his pioneering ideas and analysis of semiconductor laser and optical devices, which have had a significant impact on optical communication and wider photonic applications. Professor O’Reilly’s list of over 200 publications includes seven book chapters, review papers and articles for the journal Physics World.

Mark Bailey is Honorary Professor at Queen’s University Belfast and Director of Armagh Observatory. His scholarly work spans several fields in astronomy, most recently in solar system dynamics and the origin of comets. His book ‘The origin of comets’ (1990), with S.V.M. Clube and W.M. Napier, achieved high international acclaim. In addition to his frontline scientific research, Professor Bailey has made several important contributions to the history of astronomy.

John J. Boland is Professor of Chemistry and Director of the CRANN Nanoscience Institute at Trinity College Dublin. He is internationally recognised as an expert on the properties of surfaces and interfaces and the role of stress in developing strongly bonded nanoscale structures. His current research interests focus on understanding the properties of surfaces and interfaces and the role of stress in developing strongly bonded nanoscale structures. His research on the properties of surfaces and interfaces and the role of stress in developing strongly bonded nanoscale structures.

Hugh Brady has been President of University College Dublin since 2004. A nephrologist by training, Dr Brady has become internationally recognised as a medical researcher specialising in the molecular basis for inflammatory disease and the complications of diabetes. Other research interests include the application of novel genomics and bioinformatics approaches to the identification of novel therapeutic targets in renal disease and investigation of the molecular components of pro-resolution pathways in inflammation that can be therapeutically targeted. Dr Brady lists over 140 publications, including 78 peer-reviewed research works and 35 review articles.

Stefan Decker is Chair of Digital Enterprise at the National University of Ireland, Galway and is director of the Digital Enterprise Research Institute, one of the leading institutes in Web science and the evolution of the World Wide Web. He is one of the most cited Web scientists internationally, and his current research interests include Semantic Web (or ‘Web 2.0’) and Distributed systems. Professor Decker has been one of the first researchers to recognise the importance of the exchange of social and collaboration metadata on the Web.

Timothy Foster is Professor of Molecular Microbiology at Trinity College Dublin. His research interests include antibiotic resistance mechanisms, immune evasion mechanisms and virulence factors. He is recognised for his pioneering research on Staphylococcus aureus (MRSA), a bacterium that can cause serious infections in humans and farm animals, and which is notorious for being resistant to many antibiotics. By studying proteins from the bacterial cell surface, Professor Foster tries to understand the mechanisms that allow the bacterium to colonise human skin as well as occasionally to cause invasive disease.

Jane Grimson

John J. Boland

Hugh Brady

Stefan Decker

Timothy Foster
Paul Ross is Head of Food Research at Teagasc and Adjunct Professor at University College Cork. During his 25-year research career he has published over 250 peer-reviewed papers and has earned a reputation as a scientist of international consequence in the areas of food microbiology, functional foods and genomics. Professor Ross has provided outstanding leadership in developing the biotechnology programme at Moorepark and the Alimentary Pharmacology Centre at UCC, in supervising graduate students and in carrying research results through to application in the food industry.

Da-Wen Sun holds the chair of Food and Biosystems Engineering at University College Dublin. His many scholarly works have become standard reference material for researchers in the areas of computer vision, computational fluid dynamics modelling and vacuum cooling. Professor Sun has published well over 200 peer-reviewed papers in international journals and has edited 10 authoritative books. He is Editor-in-Chief of the journal Food and Bioprocess Technology and Editor of the series Contemporary Food Engineering. Thomson Scientific ranks him among the top one per cent of authors cited in the agricultural sciences.

Maria Baghramian is Associate Professor of Philosophy at University College Dublin and Co-Director of the Cognitive Science Programme at UCC. She was a founding member of the Editorial Board of the International Journal of Philosophical Studies. Professor Baghramian is internationally recognised for her research in the philosophy of language and contemporary American philosophy. Her monograph Relativism (2004) is regarded as a definitive contribution to the topic. Her work Modern philosophy of language (1998) has been widely adopted as a textbook in the area and has been translated into Chinese.

Caoimhín Breathnach is Senior Lecturer in Modern Irish at University College Dublin. He is widely acknowledged as a principal authority in the field of Classical Irish Philology, with a special interest and expertise in all aspects of the transmission and content of early modern political and religious literature. He is a joint editor of the Apocryphal Hibernicae project for the prestigious Corpus Christianorum series (published by Brepols). Dr Breathnach is a former Government of Ireland Senior Research Fellow and has lectured widely internationally.

Mark Thornton Burnett is Professor of English literature at Queen's University Belfast. He is acknowledged as one of the leading figures in Renaissance literary Studies today, with an admired standing internationally. The author of a series of highly influential monographs and articles, Professor Burnett has recently been a key figure in opening up the field of adaptations and appropriations of Shakespeare in modern culture across the world. This is evident in his book Shakespeare in the global marketplace (2007) and his current project Shakespeare and world cinema.

James Stevens Curl is Professor Emeritus of Architectural History at De Montfort University, Leicester and Honorary Research Fellow at Queen’s University Belfast. His wide-ranging, pioneering and internationally acclaimed research has resulted in numerous books, distinguished by his rare and compelling combination of passion and scholarship. Among his many defining works are: Victorian architecture: Diversity and invention (2007); Oxford dictionary of architecture and landscape architecture (2006); and The Egyptian revival: Ancient Egypt as the inspiration for design models in the West(2005).

Mary Daly is a Professor of Sociology at Queen’s University Belfast. She is one of Ireland’s foremost analysts of welfare regimes. As a comparative sociologist well known in Europe, she works on the divide between social policy and sociology and engages closely with European policymaking. Her recent research interests include the development of social policy under the labour strategy. Professor Daly has developed a worldwide reputation for her work on gender and welfare, on which she has published extensively, and more recently, on European Union social policy and the sociology of the family.

Caroline Fennell is Professor of the Faculty of Law at University College Cork and Chairperson of the Irish Research Council for the Humanities and Social Sciences. Professor Fennell was Dean of the Law Faculty at UCC from 1996–99 and is an external examiner in the Law of Evidence for the Kings Inns and a consultant on the law of Evidence for the Law Society of Ireland. Her publications include Crime and crisis in Ireland; justice by illusion (1993) and Labour of evidence in Ireland (2nd edn, 2003).

Siniša Malešević is Senior Lecturer at the School of Political Science and Sociology at the National University of Ireland, Galway. His research interests are in the areas of comparative historical and theoretical study of ethnic conflict and nationalism, ideology, war and violence, as well as in sociological theory. He has written on the great conflicts of our times, notably those of Rwanda and the former Yugoslavia. Dr Malešević’s most recent work, The sociology of war and violence (2010), first published in English, is being translated into Croatian and Serbian.
Honorary Members

Maurice Manning is Adjunct Professor at the School of Politics and International Relations at University College Dublin. His publications include two books on modern Irish politics and numerous academic papers. Dr Manning served for 25 years in the Dail and Seanaid Eireann. In 2001 he was appointed by the government to chair the first Irish Human Rights Commission (IHRC), a position he still holds. Dr Manning was also elected Chancellor of the National University of Ireland in 2009 and is Chair of the European Group of National Human Rights Institutions.

Pól Ó Dochartaigh is Professor of German and Dean of the Faculty of Arts at the University of Ulster. His scholarly work on the legacy of the Holocaust combines literature, history and film in an interdisciplinary way, while his work on German-Irish cultural relations includes significant new insights into the history of Celtic Studies. Professor Ó Dochartaigh’s biography of Julius Pokorny, the Austrian-Catholic and refugee from the Nazis, Julius Pokorny, 1887–1970: Germans, Celts and nationalism (2004), was greeted with international academic acclaim on its publication.

Mary O'Dowd is Professor of Gender History at Queen’s University Belfast. She is an authority on early modern Irish history and is one of the leading Irish practitioners of gender history. Her many publications, which include Power, politics and land: early modern Ulster, 1568–1660 (1991); Field Day anthology of Irish writings, volumes 4–5 (co-editor, 2002) and A history of women in Ireland, 1500–1800 (2005), combine profound archival knowledge and attention to detail with an acute awareness of the most recent trends in historiography.

Karl Whelan is a Professor of Economics at University College Dublin since 2007. Previously, he worked in central banking at the Federal Reserve Board and the Central Bank of Ireland. His research focuses on a wide range of topics in applied macroeconomics and has been published in many of the leading economics journals, such as the American Review and Journal of Monetary Economics. Professor Whelan currently acts as an advisor to the European Parliament on issues relating to monetary policy and contributes regularly to economic policy debates in Ireland.

James Whiston has been a Fellow and Associate Professor of Hispanic at Trinity College, Dublin, where he has spent all of his academic life. He is one of the world’s leading authorities on the novels of Pérez Galdós. Professor Whiston also specialises in the writings of Antonio Machado during the Second Spanish Republic (1921–25) and the writings of Manuel Azaña. Professor Whiston has published important books and articles on Jorge Luis Borges, Federico García Lorca and Antonio Machado. He is also acknowledged throughout the world of Hispanic Studies and is General Editor of the Journal of Spanish Studies.

Peter Brown is Philip and Beulah Rollins Professor of History at Princeton University. He is credited with having created the field of study referred to as Late Antiquity (AD 250–850). Professor Brown’s primary research interests are the transition from Antiquity to the Middle Ages and the rise of Christianity, and he has pursued these interests through investigations into such diverse topics as ‘Roman rhetoric’, ‘The cult of the saints’ and ‘Wealth and poverty’. He is the author of a dozen books, including The world of Late Antiquity (1971) and Poverty and leadership in the later Roman Empire (2005).

Rita Colwell is Distinguished University Professor both at the University of Maryland, College Park and at Johns Hopkins University, Bloomberg School of Public Health, and Chairperson of Corin US Life Sciences, Inc. Professor Colwell served as 11th Director of the US National Science Foundation (NSF) from 1998–2004. In her capacity as NSF Director, she served as Co-Chair of the Committee on Science of the National Science and Technology Council. Born in Beverly, Massachusetts, Professor Colwell holds a BS in Bacteriology and an MS in Genetics from Brandeis University, and a PhD in Oceanography from the University of Washington. She is a fellow member of Science Foundation Ireland.

Robert Fitzroy (Roy) Foster is Carroll Professor of Irish History at Oxford and a fellow of Hartford College and the British Academy. He is the author of many books on the political, social, cultural and literary history of Ireland, including The Irish story: telling tales and making it up in Ireland (2001) and Modern Ireland: 1600–1972 (1988). Professor Foster was the author of the official biography of W.B. Yeats, published in two volumes, W.B. Yeats: A life, 1 (The apprentice mage, 1865–1914) (1997) and 2 (The arch poet, 1914–1939) (2005). His most recent work concerns social and political change in Ireland in the late-twentieth century.

Susan Hockfield is the 16th President of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Dr Hockfield is a noted neuroscientist whose research has focused on the development of the brain and on gliomas, a deadly kind of brain cancer. She pioneered the use of intracranial antibody technology in brain research, leading to her discovery of a protein that regulates changes in neural structure. More recently, she discovered a gene and its family of protein products that play a critical role in the spread of cancer in the brain and may represent new therapeutic targets for gliomas.
John Brew was elected President of the British Sociological Association during the academic year 2009–10 and appointed to the United Nations Roster of Global Experts.

Maurice Eric was awarded the Neil Irish Historical Research Prize for 2009 for his book Ireland, Philadelphia and the invention of America 1760–1800.

Angela Bourke held a Bogliasco fellowship at Center Studi Ligure, Bogliasco, Italy, from April–May 2010.

Diarmuid Barron received the Award for Service to Chemistry by the Royal Society for Chemistry, presented at the Prize Ceremony in Birmingham in November 2009.

Anne Buttimer was appointed Chairperson of the Social Science Section of the Control of Academia Europaea.

Bruce Campbell was elected a fellow of the British Academy in July 2009 (Section 52: Economics and Economic History).

John Corish was awarded the Boyle-Higgins Gold Medal of the Institute of Chemistry of Ireland for 2009.

Michael Noél Caruth was appointed DAAD Guest Professor at the Institute of Cultural Anthropology/European Ethnology at the University of Cologne.

Edward Patrick (Paddy) Cunningham was presented with the Lord Mayor of Dublin’s Award in 2009.

Edward Patrick (Paddy) Cunningham was awarded an honorary doctorate of law by Case Western Reserve University, in Cleveland, Ohio in May 2009.

Máireád Nic Craith was appointed ‘Korrespondierendes Mitglied in Austria’ (Corresponding Member Abroad) of the Austrian Academy of Sciences in April 2009.

Seamus Mac Mathuna was elected Corresponding Member Abroad of the Austrian Academy of Sciences in April 2009.

William Schabas was awarded an honorary doctorate of law by Case Western Reserve University, in Cleveland, Ohio in May 2009.

Kevin H. O’Rourke was awarded the 2010 PSA Award of Merit at the American Association for the Advancement of Science.

John Morrill has been Professor of British and Irish History at the University of Cambridge since 1998, as well as Vice-Master of Selwyn College, Cambridge since 1994. He was Vice-President of the British Academy (2001–9), member and trustee of the Arts and Humanities Research Board of Great Britain and Northern Ireland (2001–5), Consultant Editor for Oxford University Press’ Oxford Dictionary of National Biography and contributor to the Oxford Dictionary of Irish Biography (2009). He has written and edited 19 books on early modern British and Irish history, and is an expert on state formation and confessional politics.

Ernest Nicholson graduated with a first-class honours degree in Semitic languages from Trinity College Dublin in 1964, and in 1964 obtained a PhD from the University of Michigan. He was an Oral Professor of the Interpretation of Holy Scripture at the University of Oxford and a Fellow of Balliol College from 1979 to 1990. In 1987 Professor Nicholson was elected a Fellow of the British Academy, and from 1990 until his retirement in 2003 was Provost of Balliol College. Among Professor Nicholson’s publications are: Deuteronomy and tradition (1967) and The Pentateuch in the twentieth century: The legacy of Julius Wellhausen (1998).

Philip Pettit is a Laureate S. Rockefeller University Professor of Politics and Public Affairs at Princeton University. He is a Fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences and a Fellow of the Australian Academy in Humanities and Social Sciences. He is Honorary Professor at both Queen’s University Belfast and Sydney University. Among his books are The common mind (1996), Republicanism (1997), Making with words (2008), Economy of reasons (2004) with G. Brennan; A political philosophy in public life: Civic republicanism in Zapatero’s Spain, with J. Martí (2010), and Group agency (2011) with C. List.

Karl Theodore (Theo) Hoppen graduated with a first-class honours degree in Modern History and Politics at UCD (BA 1961 and MA 1964) and Trinity College Cambridge (PhD 1967). From 1966 to 2003 he was a member of the History Department in the University of Hull (where he is now Emeritus Professor). Between 1994 and 1996 he was a British Academy Research Reader in the Humanities. In 2001 he was elected a Fellow of the British Academy. Theo Hoppen has published and edited a number of books (as well as numerous articles) on Irish and British history in the period since 1860. He is an editor of the RIA’s Dictionary of Irish Biography (2009).

Geoffrey Roger Luckhurst has been Emeritus Professor of English at the University of Southampton since 2004. He is a Fellow of the Royal Society of Chemistry and an Honoured Member of the International Liquid Crystal Society, of which he is a former President. Professor Luckhurst is a co-founder of the international journal Liquid Crystals, which he recently celebrated its 20th anniversary. His research is aimed at understanding the behaviour of liquid crystals at both molecular and macroscopic levels and involves work in design and synthesis, physical characterisation and molecular modelling and analytic theory.

Harry White was awarded the Michael J. Durkan Prize of the Royal Irish Academy in 2009. He has received the Award for Service to Chemistry by the Royal Society for Chemistry, presented at the Prize Ceremony in Birmingham in November 2009.

Anne Buttimer was appointed Chairperson of the Social Science Section of the Control of Academia Europaea.

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William Watts (1930–2010)

William (Bill) Watts was born on 26 May 1930 at Upper Mayor St, East Wall, Dublin, to a family whose forebears had come from Scotland, Northern Ireland and Lancashire to live and work in Counties Down and Cork. Immediately after his birth the family moved to Athy, Co. Kildare. Bill attended the Model School, winning scholarships to St Andrew’s College, Clyde Road in 1941 and to Trinity College Dublin with a Scholarship in 1948, where he read French and German and subsequently Natural Science. A Foundation Scholar in 1950, he graduated with two First Class Scholarships in 1952 and 1953, thanks to his two most important mentors, David Webb, Professor of Botany, and Frank Mitchell, Professor of Quaternary Palaeoecology. After two years as a lecturer in Hull, Bill Watts returned to take up a lectureship in botany at Trinity, was elected a Fellow in 1960 and a Member of the Royal Irish Academy in 1964, and succeeded to the Chair of Botany the following year. In 1980 he was appointed to the Chair of Quaternary Ecology.

Much of Watts’s research was done with colleagues in the United States, where he was an influential mentor of many who subsequently became leaders in their fields. His main area of expertise was in palynology, with particular focus on the Irish landscape, the frontier zones between temperate and tropical climates in the USA, and southern Italy (Lake Monticchio). This involved arduous expeditions to extract cores from peat bogs or deep lake mud, followed by long hours at the microscope identifying and analyzing pollen grains and other fossil plant remains. What emerged was climate history on a grand scale.

A substantial body of Bill Watts’s publications appeared during the decade 1981–91, when he combined two of the most significant offices in Irish intellectual and academic life: provostship of Trinity College Dublin and presidency of the Royal Irish Academy. Before his election as Provost in 1981 he had served as Senior Lecturer (Chief Academics’ Officer), 1970–4, when he played a major role in setting up and acting as the first Chair of the Central Applications Office. Student numbers increased by a factor of 25% during his provostship, which saw Trinity evolve into a major international research university, supported by a substantial building programme. Having been Science Secretary from 1980 to 1982, Watts’s tenure as President of the Royal Irish Academy was marked by the prestigious celebration of the Academy’s bicentenary and the publication, under his editorship, of The Royal Irish Academy: a bicentennial history (1785–1985) (1985).

‘I enjoyed being a chairman and guiding debate to clear decisions, he wrote in his memoir. His skills were employed in a wide range of areas. He served as secretary and chairman of An Taisce, where he collaborated with the Office of Public Works to help set up the national parks at Killarney, the Burren, Glenarm and Ballynacorry (Co. Mayo). He was founding chairman of the Federated Dublin Hospitals and of the Dublin Dental Hospital. He served as Governor of the National Gallery and of Nestlé’s Library, Chairman of Fota Trust and a board member of the Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies and the National Board for Science and Technology.

Bill Watts was the first Trinity Provost in 400 years to record his memoirs. With its noteworthy introduction by his colleague and friend, Adrian Clarke, Provost Trinity College Dublin: A memoir (2008) provides a characteristically clear-headed account of his life and career. A Festchrift in celebration of his 70th birthday in 2000 listed his most important publications (1957–2000) in the fields of quaternary science and nature conservation and attracted contributions from his research collaborators and students across the world, notably in Britain, the USA, Sweden, Denmark, Greenland, Norway and Ireland. Aged over 70 delegates and reporting on work as far afield as Ethiopia, the Faroe Islands, Italy, Mexico, Patagonia and the USA (all areas which owed a debt to Bill’s pioneering research), the conference papers appeared as volume 101B of Biology and Environment, Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy Section B, under the title: ‘From palaeoecology to conservation: an interdisciplinary vision’, Fraser J.G. Mitchell (ed.). Bill Watts died suddenly on 26 April 2010.

William Watts, courtesy of the Irish Times.
Sheila Tinney, who has died aged 92, was a pioneering academic in the field of Mathematical Physics. She was born in Galway in 1918, the fourth of six children.

Her father, Michael Power, was Professor of Mathematics at UCG. Her mother, Christina (née Cunniffe), died in childbirth when Sheila was 12.

One of Sheila’s fondest memories was of her mother playing the piano at home, and she became an accomplished pianist herself, in turn inspiring her own children to learn to play.

She was educated by the Dominican nuns at Taylor’s Hill and Cabra. In an era when ‘arithmetic—girls only’ was a subject for the Intermediate Certificate—only eight girls (126 boys) got honours in Mathematics in the leaving Certificate in 1935—it was a groundbreaking step to opt for Mathematical Science at university. But she did, and was awarded a BA in 1938 at UCD, with first-class honours and first place.

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Sheila Tinney (1918–2010)
Ulster-born Francis Bacon once said, ‘What we know is a drop. What we do not know an ocean.’ Sheila Tinney shared that view, and her teaching was an ocean of knowledge. She described her as ‘among the best equipped and most successful of the younger generation of theoretical physicists in this country’.

Schrödinger described her as ‘among the best equipped and most successful of the younger generation of theoretical physicists in this country’. She taught many brilliant students, perhaps the most outstanding of whom was Lochlainn Ó Raifeartaigh, who became renowned for his work in particle theory. When she first joined the staff at UCD there was a very large teaching load.

Many Departments had just, as the saying went, ‘a man and a boy’—a professor and an assistant lecturer. As well as carrying out her research, and teaching honours degree students in mathematical science, she also taught the first-year engineering students for many years. This was a very large class, for her high spirits.


Sheila Tinney died peacefully on 27 March 2010, following 37 years of teaching. An active and varied retirement was blighted by the onset of Alzheimer’s, which was diagnosed in 1994. This forced her gradual withdrawal into the privacy of family life, and eventually to the Molyneux Home, where she spent the last nine years of her life. She died peacefully there. She was predeceased by her husband Seán in 2003.

Any account of Sheila Tinney’s life would be incomplete if it did not say that she was an exceptionally beautiful and charming woman. She is survived by her three children, Deirdre, Ethna and Hugh, and by her grandchildren.

The re-appointment of the Academy Committees was undertaken in 2009 using a new uniform structure. The newly-formed Committees got straight down to agreeing on proposals and developing their programmes of work. Encouraged to contribute to areas of strategic importance, address issues of public concern, foster excellence and sustain international linkages, Committee membership is drawn from the entire island of Ireland. Cross-disciplinary collaboration is also an important element of Committee work. To this end, the Boards for Sciences and Humanities and Social Sciences, bringing together the Council of the Academy and the Committee Chairs, met to promote information exchange and the cross-fertilisation of ideas and to discuss areas of potential collaboration.

The Committees managed an active programme of work despite being at an early stage in their terms of office. Some key events that took place throughout the year are outlined below.

Sue Scott and the Climate Change Sciences Committee produced the 8th Scientific Statement on ‘Market-based policies for reducing carbon dioxide emissions’. The Geosciences Committee, in collaboration with the Geological Surveys of Ireland and Northern Ireland and with sponsorship from Shell E&P Ireland Ltd and the ESB, ran a decidedly successful international conference in March 2010 in Dublin Castle, on ‘Carbon Capture and Storage: Bridging the Transact’ from Fossil Fuels to...
forward to future Committee programmes, projects and events.

The Life Sciences lecture given on 1 December 2009 in Academy House, ‘Bench-to-Bedside Research—a Two-Way Street’, by Jochen Prehn, was a great success. Preparations are now underway for the Life Sciences Scientific Statements series.

On Wednesday, 16 September 2009 the Academy Committee for Astronomy and Space Sciences hosted the opening event of the ‘9th European Symposium for the Protection of the Night Sky’, which was held in Armagh over the three days that followed. Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government John Gormley, TD, launched the event, which was followed by an entertaining public lecture by Luke Enright entitled ‘What is light?’

Professor Michael Rowan-Robinson, Imperial College London gave the biannual McCrea Lecture, entitled ‘The Cosmology of Distant and Dusty Galaxies’, on 2 November in Academy House and also in the University of Ulster on the following evening.

On 3-4 September 4th Literatures in English Committee hosted a well-attended conference on ‘Ireland and the Fin de Siècle’, opened by Edelwee Viville with a paper on ‘Maclean’s the Last Wiktore Decadent’ Meanwhile, Nicola Gordon-Brown gave the keynote lecture on ‘Myths, Dreams or Unearthed Truths? Symbolic imagery in the Art of Fin de Siècle Ireland’.

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If you think you are unique in Ireland, you’re crazy’ said Dr Craig Barrett, former chairman and CEO of Intel. Dr Barrett’s speech at the Farmleigh summit in Dublin in 2009 was described by some as a ‘steady call for Ireland’s education system. Barrett’s simple message was that Ireland’s performance is only average in education, especially in the subject of maths, and that this does not allow for the development of a competitive economy.

Following his contribution at Farmleigh, the Academy invited Barrett to present a public lecture on the subject of ‘Competitiveness’. Organised in conjunction with Dublin City Council and the Irish Times, the lecture took place in the Mansion House on 8 February 2010.

In his address, Barrett championed the case for a competitive Ireland that encourages ‘smart people with smart ideas in the right environment’. He focused on three areas that he felt could leverage Ireland back into a more sustainable, competitive economic position: education; research and development; and entrepreneurial culture. ‘If you look at your investment in research and development, okay, it’s grown a bit, but it’s still very average by most measures. And things in the environment that allowed you to be so successful—the low corporate tax rate, the IDA—all of those things have been copied by many other people, so what exactly do you have that is unique?’

While Barrett warned that ‘inevitably, you face a decade of very challenging environment’, he outlined the importance of Ireland’s response to economic challenges, saying: ‘You need to grow your

Competitive measures

>> Casimir Graham remembers Craig Barrett’s lecture on ‘competitiveness’
‘The Future Role of the University in a Changing World’

Niall Matthews discusses a lecture by Professor Drew Faust, President of Harvard University.
the role of the university should not be distorted by this increasing focus on higher education as the engine of economic growth.

She noted that as many other institutions in today’s world appear to be failing in their remit, universities ‘harness the hopes of the world in solving challenges that cross borders, in cultivating and harnessing new knowledge, in building cultural and political understanding, and modelling environments that generate dialogue and debate’.

Discourse respondent, Trinity College Provost John Hegarty, concurred with Faust’s emphasis on the compatibility and common goals of the sciences and humanities, while also underlining the need for continued investment in higher education in Ireland.

The discourse attracted widespread media coverage, with Professor Faust appearing on the Pat Kenny Show on RTÉ Radio, as well as being quoted in several pieces in the Irish Times. Professor Faust also had a meeting with An Taoiseach Brian Cowen, TD, during which they discussed the potential offered by Ireland’s strengths in the humanities, social sciences and creative disciplines, and how this can be harnessed to stimulate economic recovery and address complex social and policy problems.

The discourse was co-sponsored by the Irish Research Council for the Humanities and Social Sciences.
Mr Liam Cosgrave, former taoiseach (left) and Mr Seán Cromien (MRIA) at the launch of Tom Garvin’s Judging Lemass.

Left to right: Emile Elewaut (TNO Netherlands), Richard Vernon (SLR Consulting), Nicholas Canny (PRIA), John Barry (Shell), Peadar McArdle (GSI) at the ‘Carbon Capture and Storage’ conference in Dublin Castle.

Left to right: Professor David Fegan (Academy Senior Vice-President), Minister for Foreign Affairs Micheál Martin, TD, Dr Noel Dorr (Chair, Academy Committee for International Affairs) at the opening of the 2009 International Affairs conference.

Left: Hamilton Prize 2009 winners: 1) Back row L-R: Ruairi Hourihane (UCC), Jennifer Tweed (DCU) and Kevin Burke (UL) Middle row L-R: Gavin Armstrong (NUIM), Christopher Blair (TCD), Jason Hartnett (UCD), Mark Foy (QUB). Front row L-R: Kieran Gilmore (UL), Jenny Young (Invest NI), Nicholas Canny (PRIA), Efim Zelmanov (UCSD), Yvonnes Kelly (UA). Right: Professor Richard English (UL) on one of the discussion panels of the Celebrating Thinking series.

Left: Left to right: Professor David Fegan (Academy Senior Vice-President), Minister for Foreign Affairs Michael Martin, TD, Dr Pat Donlan (Chair, Academy Committee for International Affairs) at the opening of the 2009 International Affairs conference.

Mr Liam Cosgrave, former taoiseach (left) and Mr Seán Cromien (MRIA) at the launch of Tom Garvin’s Judging Lemass.
An Taoiseach Brian Cowen, TD, with editors James Quinn (left) and James McGuire (right) at the launch of the Dictionary of Irish Biography.

Professor Drew Gilpin Faust (HonFRSA, President of Harvard), before her address to the Academy on ‘The Future Role of the University’.

Ryan Tubridy and Peter Mooney (RTÉ) at the launch of Conspiracy: Irish political trials (2009), by Myles Dungan (right).

An Taoiseach Brian Cowen, TD, with editor James Quinn (left) and James McGuire (right) at the launch of the Dictionary of Irish Biography.

Professor Drew Gilpin Faust (President of Harvard), addressing the Academy on ‘The Future Role of the University’.

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THE POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC ASPECTS OF NATURAL HAZARDS

MAPPING LIMERICK’S URBAN HISTORY

ALOYS FLEISCHMANN
and the Development of Musicology in Ireland
Professor Harry White, MRJA
Art and Architecture of Ireland (AAI)

Minister for Tourism, Culture and Sport Mary Hanafin, TD, opened the meeting of the Art and Architecture of Ireland Main Board on 12 May 2010. The Main Board comprises representatives from all the major Irish cultural institutions and will meet annually during the life of the project to review progress.

Art and Architecture of Ireland is a major, innovative scholarly project of national and international importance. No work of this scale—a comprehensive, fully illustrated account of Irish art and architecture from the earliest times to 2000—has ever been attempted before.

The work of research and writing for the project is well underway. More than 20 scholars are currently engaged in the project, over 200 expert contributors have agreed to write specialised entries, and over 60,000 words are already completed and have gone to the copyeditors. Illustrations are being sourced and copyright permissions obtained.

The editors of the five volumes come from TCD, UCD, the Irish Museum of Modern Art (IMMA), the Crawford Art Gallery, Cork, and the University of Pittsburgh, USA. The General Editor, Andrew Carpenter, is Professor Emeritus of English at UCD and a Member of the Academy.

There is an Advisory Board for each volume, made up of national and international experts in all aspects of the art and architecture of Ireland. These experts come from all major universities throughout Ireland and Britain, from the National College of Art and Design (NCAD), the National Museum, the National Gallery and many other institutions and organisations associated with the art and architecture of Ireland.

Each volume will contain around 600 pages, and will be published as follows: I Medieval Art and Architecture, edited by Rachel Moss, TCD; II Painters and Painting 1600–1900, edited by Nicola Fogg, UCD; III Sculptors and Sculpture 1600–2000, edited by Paula Murphy, UCD; IV Architects and Architecture 1600–2000, edited by Rolf Loeber, University of Pittsburgh and Hugh Campbell, UCD; V Twentieth-Century Art and Artists, edited by Peter Murray, Crawford Art Gallery, Cork and Catherine Marshall, IMMA. Yale University Press (with the support of the Paul Mellon Centre in London) is to publish the five volumes in 2014 and the electronic version will be published shortly thereafter.

The RIA is proud to be managing this project, which is being financially supported by the Naughton Trust as well as by the Department of Tourism, Culture and Sport.

Ms Anita Griffin, Project Manager of Art and Architecture of Ireland
Dictionary of Irish Biography (DIB)

When An Taoiseach Brian Cowen, TD, launched the RIA’s Dictionary of Irish Biography (9 volumes and online, Cambridge University Press), edited by James McGuire and James Quinn, at a reception in Dublin Castle on 18 November 2009, he described it as a milestone in the history of scholarship in Ireland. The DIB covers in 9,014 biographical articles over 9,700 lives from the earliest recorded history to 2002. The range of occupations and careers covered can be seen in 44 search categories on the DIB Online (http://dib.cambridge.org).

Subsequent launches by distinguished speakers in London (Ambassador Bobby McDonagh), Belfast (Seamus Heaney, MRIA), New York (Professor J.J. Lee, MRIA), Boston (Professor Thomas Bartlett, MRIA) and Toronto (Professor Ann Saddlemyer, Order of Canada) promoted the DIB internationally and provided the editors with an opportunity to meet and thank some of the many contributors and editorial advisors whose work made the DIB possible. The project and the Academy are indebted to the institutions that hosted and sponsored these launch receptions. On 25 May 2010 Professor Nicholas Canny, MRIA, presented a DIB set to President Mary McAleese at Áras an Uachtaráin.

Since the DIB’s publication, the project’s mailbag has reflected the extent of public interest, much of it stimulated by media coverage, including two one-hour radio features, ‘Talking History’ on Newstalk 106–108 (26 December) and the Myles Dungan programme on RTÉ Radio 1. On 14 May the Irish Times ran a series of articles on ‘Journalists and the Dictionary of Irish Biography’, at which a series of short papers nicely illustrated how the DIB can be of use to media historians; among the speakers was Stephen Collins, the Irish Times’s Political Editor.

Members of the Dictionary project have spoken at several societies and seminars, including; Irish Legal History Society (James McGuire); Offaly Historical and Archaeological Society (Terry Clavin); UCD Micheál Ó Cléirigh Institute (James McGuire); Ulster Society for Irish Historical Studies (James McGuire); Coleraine Historical Society (Linde Lunney); Genealogical Society of Ireland (James McGuire); Meath Landscape and People Seminar, Trim (James McGuire); and Phizzfest, Phibsborough Arts Festival 2010 (James Quinn). On 26 February Lawrence White read a paper on the DIB at a major conference, ‘From Reference Work to Information System’, which was held in Munich under the auspices of Neue Deutsche biographie and the Bavarian State Library.

The project’s principal activity is now the preparation of twice-yearly updates, covering those who have died since 2002 and new subjects from earlier periods. Already, 36 new entries for subjects who died in 2003 have been published on the DIB Online. These include; Bishop Donal Lamont, expelled from Rhodesia (Zimbabwe) by the Smith regime; Pauline Flanagan, actor; James Plunkett, playwright and novelist; T.F. (Tom) O’Higgins, lawyer and politician; Dick Walsh, journalist; and Mary Reid, political radical and poet. In 2010 the DIB received the American Publishers Award for Professional and Scholarly Excellence (PROSE) for best multi-volume reference work in the humanities and social sciences.

Professor James McGuire, Managing Editor of the DIB
Dictionary of Medieval Latin from Celtic Sources (DMLCS)

Early 2010 saw DMLCS reaching a key milestone in its development. This was the completion, on schedule, of the second, revised and much expanded online edition of the project’s Archive of Celtic-Latin literature. It now contains, in their entirety, well over 500 Medieval Latin works written in the Celtic-speaking areas of Europe or by Celts abroad. The construction and maintenance of such a full text, searchable database has always been one of the principal objectives of DMLCS, since it forms the resource from which the Dictionary draws its examples. Now, the publication of the Archive online by our Belgian partners Brepols Publishers makes it available to subscribers worldwide from myriad other disciplines, whether they be editors of texts, linguists, investigators of the geographical or chronological spread of terminology for skills or artefacts, theologians, historians interested in the transmission of ideas or texts, or researchers working in other areas entirely. Broadly speaking, the DMLCS academic constituency embraces scholars working throughout the fields of Patristic, Medieval, Celtic and Latin Studies, and it has long been clear, from enquiries reaching the project office, that such individuals are to be found across four continents.

Significant increments to the Archive have been added in the past two years, each contributing hundreds of thousands of words to new continuous text while retaining all of the material from the revised first edition, but the latest release, ACLL-2.3, has seen by far the largest increase in size. Of over 60 important works included for the first time, probably the most interesting to medievalists generally will be an edition of the eighth-century Collectio canonum Hibernensis [Irish collection of Church Laws], which, at home and abroad, went on to be vastly influential to much subsequent writing in both the Latin language and the vernacular. While this and the other newly captured works now at its disposal, the DMLCS project has been reconceived to prepare not merely the next volume (non-Classical vocabulary, letters I to Z) of the Dictionary, but also a supplement to cover those words beginning with A to H that are being encountered for the first time in these works, and which were therefore not included when the first volume was published. A digital enhancement to the two volumes taken together (A to Z), which will quote the wording of the original Latin sentences containing each item of the vocabulary concerned, has been contracted for with Brepols and is being prepared simultaneously with the book.

Other ongoing efforts integral to the DMLCS database and dictionary plans include the editing of some important, but hitherto unpublished, Medieval Latin texts; these appear in the project’s Scriptores Celtigenae series, a joint venture with the Irish Biblical Association and Brepols. Further construction of the Web-based St Patrick’s Confessio Hypertext Stack, funded under Cycle Four of the Programme for Research in Third-Level Institutions (PRTLI-4), is also taking place. A multimedia event marking DMLCS’s publication in several of these areas is planned for 2011. A detailed account of all the project’s activities is kept up to date on its official website, kindly hosted by Queen’s University Belfast at: http://journals.eecs.qub.ac.uk/DMLCS (note the absence of a “www” element in this address).

Dr Anthony Harvey, Managing Editor of DMLCS
Digital Humanities Observatory (DHO)

The newly established as a central hub for the development of digital humanities in Ireland, the DHO began its third year of operation in March 2010. The project has been successfully consolidating relationships with HSS (Humanities Serving Irish Society) partner institutions through the continued provision of targeted outreach such as workshops, seminars, symposia, lectures and an annual Summer School. Much of this outreach has taken place at partner institutions, with 15 extremely successful events held since September 2009, including the Digital Resources in the Humanities and Arts conference (co-hosted at QUB, September 2009), the DHO workshop ‘Tweaking Data Differently: Emerging Tools for Scholarship, Analysis and Presentation’ (University of Ulster, February 2010), ‘E-Publishing for Postgraduates’ (UCD and NUI Galway, March and May 2010), ‘Text Encoding with the TIE’ (NUI Galway, April 2010), ‘Digital Resources for Research and Teaching in Irish Studies’ (NUI Galway, April 2010) and an international symposium on TI and Scholarship Publishing (Academy House, April 2010), held in conjunction with the Council of the Text Encoding Initiative Consortium.

The demand for consultations with DHO staff remains high, as many scholars who have attended DHO events seek follow-up advice. Increasingly also, Irish cultural heritage organisations request consultative meetings with the DHO. In January 2010, the IVC contracted with the DHO to provide the technical infrastructure for metadata collection and provision services in support of the IMC as Aggregator for European of the Irish Cultural Heritage Sector.

The DHO’s IT offerings also continue to grow. In addition to the DHO portal: http://dho.ie (note that ‘www’ is not part of the Web address), launched in 2008, a database for digital humanities projects and methods, called DRAPIer, was launched at the opening reception of the 2009 Summer School. There are currently 53 projects published, representing all HSS partner institutions. The DHO is expanding DRAPIer to include the Irish cultural heritage sector as well as collections from overseas with substantial Irish content. If development over the past year has focused on the creation of a repository to house digital content created by DHO partners. The latest IT resource, DHO Discovery, will ensure that digital projects (thematic research collections) will not only have their own look and feel, but that content will also be discoverable across projects via a discovery interface. The first thematic research collection to be hosted in the DHO’s repository, the Diogenes record: Dutch project, is a unique collection of the Academy’s library of Irish Language recordings from the early years of the Irish Free State. It was launched in October (see: http://dho.ie/discovery/) and received significant and positive press coverage.

Dr Susan Schreibman, Director of DHO

Documents on Irish Foreign Policy (DIFP)

2009 saw the launch of Documents on Irish Foreign Policy in the light of the Second World War as the project completed the research for DIFP VII. This volume was from 1941 to 1945 and will be published in November 2010. After the crisis years of 1939–40, covered in DIFP VI, the risk of an invasion of Ireland decreased, but threats to neutrality never vanished. The four-and-a-half years covered in DIFP VII are perhaps the less well-known years of The Emergency, or Ireland during the Second World War. However, DIFP VII will open up a new perspective on Ireland’s wartime neutrality and reveal many secret diplomatic undertakings.

Through 2009 Dr Kennedy and Dr O’Malley amassed many thousands of possible documents for inclusion in DIFP VII. These documents showed how flawed F.S.L. Lyons’s description of wartime Ireland as being in ‘Plato’s cave’ was, at least when it came to the diplomatic service. The Irish public may have been subjected to subvertising, but diplomatic traffic from continental Europe to Dublin shows that the Department of External Affairs was well aware of the horrors of modern warfare, as well as of the displacement of persons and the sheer destruction brought upon the European continent by the Second World War.

The Executive Editor and the editors eventually whittled the mass of available documents down to 625, including many telegrams from wartime Berlin, which will make DIFP VII a unique English language source on conditions in the German capital during the War.

DIFP VII shows, no sooner had the threat of Nazism been extinguished, than another threat—Communism—replaced it. By early 1946 the Department of External Affairs began to show increasing concern at the Communal threat to post-War Europe. The fate of Poland, Germany, Italy and France all modelled the Department of External Affairs at Leinster House, as did the future of Western Christian civilisation. At the same time, Ireland began one of its key foreign and programmes by dispatching its diplomatic and cultural missions to the embassies of the shattered continent.

While 2009 was dominated by the intensive research required for DIFP VII, DIFP maintained an active outreach programme, speaking at a wide variety of local, national and international conferences including the 19th International Conference of Editors of Diplomatic Documents at the Hague in October 2009. Dr Kennedy and Dr O’Malley also appeared regularly on radio and television.

DIFP has always embraced teaching at second and third level, and projects in Ireland (see: dho.ie/drapier/) was launched at the opening reception of the 2009 Summer School. There are 15 extremely successful events held since September 2009, including the Digital Resources in the Humanities and Arts’ conference (co-hosted at QUB, September 2009); the DHO workshop ‘Seeing Data Differently: Emerging Tools for Scholarship, Analysis and Presentation’ (University of Ulster, February 2010), ‘E-Publishing for Postgraduates’ (UCD and NUI Galway, March and May 2010), ‘Text Encoding with the TIE’ (NUI Galway, April 2010), ‘Digital Resources for Research and Teaching in Irish Studies’ (NUI Galway, April 2010) and an international symposium on TI and Scholarship Publishing (Academy House, April 2010), held in conjunction with the Council of the Text Encoding Initiative Consortium.

The DHO’s spring/summer 2010 events programme culminated in its third annual Summer School (28 June–3 July). The Summer School has grown from strength to strength, with over 200 attendees from 12 different countries. Running week-long workships, one-day workshops and intensive one-on-one coffee and consultation sessions, the DHO Summer School offers new and innovative services for participants in a user-directed environment.

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Dr Susan Schreibman, Director of DHO

Above left: Attendees at the Irish Digital Resources Workshop at the National University of Ireland, Galway.

Above right: Dr Michael Kennedy (right) with Dr David Herschler of the Foreign Relations of the United States series, at the 10th International Conference of Editors of Diplomatic Documents, Netherlands Foreign Ministry, The Hague, October 2009.
Foclóir na Nua-Ghaeilge (FNG)

The spoken word will be represented in Corpas na Gaeilge 1882–2000. As part of this endeavour, three experts on the dialects of Ireland have been engaged to identify critically significant recordings in the archives of RTÉ Raidió na Gaeltachta. These recordings will be transcribed to text form later, and included in Corpas na Gaeilge 1882–2000.

Inputting of twentieth-century texts continues in the sub-unit of the project in An Charraig, Donegal. FNG is grateful to the Higher Education Authority and the Department of Community, Equality and Gaeltacht Affairs for their continuing support for this unit, and to the National Lottery, which funds Ciste na Gaeilge in that Department.

The Editor, Dr Úna Uí Bheirn, retired in May of this year, 2010, after many years of dedication and commitment to the project. The staff and the members of the Editorial and Management Committees wish her a long and happy retirement.

Ms Déirdre D’Auria, Eagarthóir Cúnta; Assistant Editor FNG
Ms Eilís Ní Mhearraí, Oifigeach Riaracháin/Cóipeagarthóir; Administrative Officer/Copyeditor FNG
Irish Historic Towns Atlas (IHTA)

Irish Historic Towns Atlas, no. 21, Limerick by Eamon O’Flaherty, and no. 22, Longford by Sarah Gearty, Martin Morris and Fergus O’Farrell, were published this year. Limerick was launched in February 2010 at No. 2 Pery Square, Limerick, an event hosted by Limerick City Council. In June 2010, the project celebrated the publication of Longford in Longford County Library, where the contributors were hosted by Longford Town Council and the County Longford Historical Society. The project also released the text in its series of pocket maps, Dublin 1610 to 1756, the making of the early modern city, by Colin Lennon.

During the year, editorial work and mapping focused on forthcoming atlases: Sligo by Marie-Louise Legg and Fiona Gallagher, Carlingford by Harold O’ Sullivan, Ennis by Brian Ó Dalbháigh, and Youghal by Tadgh O’Valee and Davie Kelly. Also in preparation in the IHTA office are atlases for the cities of Galway by Jacinta Prunty and Paul Walsh, and Dublin, Part 1, 1756 to 1764, by Rob Goodbody. Considerable work was carried out over the summer months aided by research grants.

Authors started and continued work on Cashel, Cavan, Cork, Kinsale, Loughrea, New Ross, Roscommon, Tuam and Waterford. Ancillary publications progressed also, with a book of map extracts and commentaries by Colin Lennon and John Monaghan entitled John Rocque’s Dublin: a guide to the Georgian city (November 2010), a pocket map of Limerick by Eamon O’Flaherty and Jennifer Moore, Limerick c. 840 to c. 1900: Viking Longphort to Victorian city (November 2010), and a user’s guide to the atlas by Jacinta Prunty, which will be published in collaboration with Blackrock Education Centre.

In May 2010 the project held its annual seminar entitled ‘Maps and Texts: Exploring the Irish Historic Towns Atlas’, with an attendance of over 70 participants. This was the second of three such seminars that aim to analyse the sample of 22 town and city atlases produced to date in the Irish scheme.

Highlights of this year’s outreach activities included a spring lecture series in various Limerick venues entitled ‘Mapping Limerick’s Urban History’. Exhibitions included ‘Our Monastic Towns in Maps and Texts’ in the Royal Irish Academy during Heritage Week in August 2009 and the IHTA were also involved in the ‘Mapping Urban Ireland’ exhibition and lecture series that was launched in the Academy Library in July 2010.

In Europe, 464 atlases have been published and editors attended the annual meeting of the International Commission for the History of Towns in Luxembourg in September 2009. During the year, the project joined an FP7 application for funding, which developed plans for an online version of the IHTA in the broad and ambitious context of European activities in the area. Collaborators and funders for the past year included: Ordnance Survey Ireland, Land and Property Services Northern Ireland, Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government, Dublin City Council, Galway County Council, Longford County Council, Sligo County Council, The Heritage Council and Youghal (various private sources).

Howard Clarke continued as Chair of the Board of Editors, which also includes Anngret Simms, Raymond Gillespie and Jacinta Prunty. Jennifer Moore and Jacinta Prunty continued as editorial assistants in the atlas office, while Angela Byrne left the project in August 2010 to pursue postdoctoral studies.

Dr Angela Byrne, Professor Howard Clarke, MRIA, Ms Jennifer Moore, Dr Eamon O’Flaherty, Professor Anngret Simms, MRIA, and Ms Sarah Gearty, Professor Yvolicia Casey, MRIA and Dr Jacinta Prunty at the launch of IHTA, no. 21, Limerick, at No. 2 Pery Square, Limerick, 11 February 2010 (Photo: Press 22).
The donation, by Lady Barbara Beevor, of the Caldwell papers was the most significant Library acquisition this year. Commencing with seventeenth-century documents adding to the Caldwell family in Fermanagh, the collection encompasses the lifetimes of several notable Caldwells, including Charles Caldwell, 1707–76, solicitor to the commissioners of revenue in Dublin, and more importantly, his son Andrew, 1733–1808, barrister, MP and an early Member of the Academy. Andrew Caldwell’s circle included James Caulfeild, 1st Earl of Charlemont, Joseph Cooper Villiers and James Smith, president of the Linen Society. Andrew Caldwell’s interests included the fine arts, architecture and botany. As a Presbyterian, he attended the Strand Street Meeting House in Dublin, the records of which form part of the Library’s Dublin Unitarian Church archive. Andrew’s brother, Admiral Sir Benjamin Caldwell, 1739–1820, served with the Royal Navy in North America and the West Indies.

The Caldwell archive comprises a diverse range of property-related documents and correspondence on social, political and family matters, as well as on topics such as travel, architecture and art. Containing nine bound volumes (1639–1879) incorporating estate account books, journals of tours (nineteenth century), miscellaneous correspondence and commonplace books, this significant donation, which we plan to catalogue during the coming year, will be of immense interest to scholars and students in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

Other important acquisitions have been:

- The purchase of an early-nineteenth-century manuscript volume of the musical notations to Irish and other airs (MS 12 X 27), which includes an incomplete letter from Thomas Moore, 1779–1852, and manuscript notes on the inspiration for some of the Irish melodies, the music for which is also contained in the volume.
- The late William A. Watts, MRIA, presented Professor Knud Jessen’s field notebooks (1834–5) to the Library. These relate to Jessen’s groundbreaking research on Irish bogs. Studies in late quaternary deposits and florahistory of Ireland, published in Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy, Section B 52 (1948–50).
- Peter Woodman, MRIA, augmented the archaeology collections with a donation of titles on the history and philosophy of archaeology.
- The Library acknowledges with gratitude the donations by many Academy Members of their monographs and other books. It also acknowledges the numerous donations by readers and members of the public of works that supplement the core collections.

The major exhibition this year—Darwin, Praeger and the Clare Island Surveys—saluted the Darwin bicentenary whilst celebrating the centenary of the first Clare Island Survey and in particular the achievement of its leader, Robert Lloyd Praeger, MRIA. Jointly organised by the Library and the Publications Office through the work of Assistant Editor Roisin Jones, the exhibition was curated by Deputy Librarian Petra Schnabel. Accompanied by a booklet, edited by Roisin Jones and Mark Steer, MRIA, the exhibition was complemented by a lunchtime lecture series and by two evening lectures and a seminar of the Heron-Allen Society, which was founded to commemorate the many achievements of Edward Heron-Allen, FRS, 1861–1943, who was the contributor on Foraminifera to the first Clare Island Survey. Since January 2010, a touring Clare Island exhibition has visited venues in Castlebar, Derry, Belfast, Bangor and Galway. A variant of the Treasures of the Royal Irish Academy exhibition ran from 11–30 June at the Botanic Gardens, Belfast.
February through June 2010, enhanced by a lecture programme, whilst the Library’s Moore exhibition—‘Moore on Tour: My Gentle Harp’—continued to tour the country until May 2010.

The Library facilitated visits from 37 groups during the year, participated in Heritage Week (21–9 August, 2009) and in Culture Night (25 September, 2009), when 600 visitors were guided through the collections. A special exhibition, ‘Geometric (Bricolage)’, was featured in the Academy Meeting Rooms from Culture Night until 30 October. This display of miniature drawings of plant and animal life by the artistic team Soft Blonde Moustache had been inspired by the Darwin exhibition and was one of 21 exhibitions that ran concurrently under the umbrella of ‘The Preponderance of the Small’, a multi-site project of the Douglas Hyde Gallery.

The Library is continually seeking ways to make the collections more accessible. We therefore welcomed the opportunity to participate in Music PAL (Pathways to Learning), an all-island, cross-sectoral, managed referral initiative to encourage and enable music research, composition, production and performance. Music PAL was launched by writer and broadcaster Deirdre Purcell at the Academy on 8 March (to find out more see: www.library.ie/pal).

The Library has taken responsibility for the management of the Irish History Online database. Over 70,000 bibliographic records relating to Irish history, which were previously held on the Royal Historical Society’s server at the Institute of Historical Research in London, have been migrated to the library’s domain and a new Web interface has been developed: www.irish-historyonline.ie.

The Library continues to serve the membership and to support research projects of the Academy, our academic partner libraries and the general public. See the Library website for further news: www.ria.ie/library.

Treasures revealed

The images shown here are from two illuminated manuscript novels by A.C.U. Marchmont, presented to the Academy in 2000 by Dr Mary Pollard, MRIA, 1922–2005.

Entitled, ‘The days that are past’ (MS 12 X 22) and ‘The mysterious stranger’ (MS 12 X 23), the former was dedicated to Miss Lisette A. Cordner and an inscription on the front endpaper of the volume reads: ‘Lisette A. Cordner with her sister’s best love, Demanoise, April 27, 1864’. Demanoise probably refers to Derrynane, Co. Kerry, and it may be deduced from the inscription that the author was a Miss Marchmont. Alternatively, Marchmont may be a pseudonym.

The script is even and delicate throughout and the illustrations are assured and charming.
In the face of the ongoing economic difficulties besetting the country generally, and with the publishing industry in Ireland, and globally, suffering in broad terms, it is too much to hope that the Academy’s publication efforts might escape unscathed. The ongoing recession on public sector revenues has meant that the staffing of the Publications Office has been reduced during 2009–10, the tightening of budgets across all academic sectors and government Departments has seen funding that might previously have been available to support publication projects shrink dramatically, and monetary pressures, not least on the book-buying public, have impacted on the bookshops. All of these factors have had an effect on the Academy’s publication efforts, albeit ones that we may not fully realise until we come to write the reviews for 2010–11 and beyond.

Accentuating the positive
In the meantime we can only look at the positives—highlighting the achievements of late-2009 and early-2010, and focusing on our plans and aspirations for the rest of 2010 and further ahead. One positive item to report is that sales of Academy publications held up very well for 2009. The total figures for sales of both books and journals for 2009 are outlined in Appendix V. The publication and launch of the landmark Dictionary of Irish Biography in November 2009, discussed in the project report elsewhere in this Review, is another positive to reflect on for the year; as is the success of Judging Lemass: the measure of the man, by Tom Garvin, MRIA, which was launched in September 2009 by An Taoiseach Brian Cowen, TD; and Conspiracy: Irish political trials, by Myles Dungan, launched in October 2009.

In Judging Lemass, Tom Garvin offers an exploration of the many facets of the character of former Taoiseach Seán Lemass, whose time in charge of the Department of Industry and Commerce marked the beginning of a long process that transformed Ireland from an agrarian province to a thriving, developed country. The process of change has been seen as a model for many aspirant developing countries. In Conspiracy, which sought to make archival material on Irish legal and political history accessible to a broad, general audience, Myles Dungan considers the clashes, plots and proceedings that characterized seven notorious trials held between 1803 and 1916, including that of Robert Emmet, the courts martial following the 1916 Rising and the trials in 1882 of those accused of the Maamtrasna Murders.

February 2010 saw the publication of a special issue of the journal Biology & Environment, devoted to the EU Water Framework Directive and its implications for Ireland. This publication, edited by Dr Tom Curtis and Dr Mary Kelly-Quinn, was launched in Academy House by Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government John Gormley, TD. The Water Framework Directive is the most important piece of European Union water legislation to date. The aim of the special issue of Biology & Environment was to collate in one volume all of the work pertinent to the Directive carried out by the various stakeholders in both state and semi-state agencies and by local authorities, universities and expert consultants. February also saw the publication of the 21st fascicle of the Irish Historic Towns Atlas series, (Irish), which is discussed in the IHTA project pages, along with the longed-for volume, published in June, and the other ancillary publications due from the project later in 2010.

Another late-summer 2010 publication is Policing the narrow ground: lessons from the transformation of policing in Northern Ireland. This is a collection of essays containing reflections from key actors involved in the hugely important reform process behind the Patten Report on policing in Northern Ireland, including Chris Pathe himself, Hugh O’Donohue and Nicola O’Gara. In addition, the volume, which is edited by Dr John Doyle (also Editor of the Academy’s Irish Studies International Affairs journal), contains a number of academic analyses of the process of policing reform in Northern Ireland and its international significance.

In Autumn 2010 we look forward to the publication of the seventh volume in the Documents on Irish Foreign Policy series; the Law of the Sea, a book by former diplomat Maurice Wines on the negotiations that led to the treaty of that name and the role of the Irish delegation during the UN conferences at which it was negotiated; and a history of the Cumann na nGaedheal party by Ciara Meehan. Work is ongoing on the Excavations at Knowth series; the New Survey of Clare Island series; a monograph about Domestic life in Ireland, which is a supplementary publication of the Academy’s journal Proceedings Section C; and a variety of other projects in development or under consideration. We continue to receive submissions and proposals, from the membership of the Academy and the wider academic community, but also from outside those traditional audiences for Academy publications, which again can only be considered a positive response to the Academy’s ongoing efforts to support and promote scholarly excellence and communicate scholarly material to a wider public.

David O’Connell (detail from group portrait attributed to Joseph Patrick Haverty, RHA) taken from Conspiracy: Irish political trials, by Myles Dungan.
Mobility Grants

In 2009, 10 awards were made under the Academy's Mobility Grants Scheme, which was followed up with the award of 11 grants under the 2010 round of the Scheme. The Mobility Grants Scheme is designed to provide funding to early career researchers in both the sciences and the humanities to undertake short visits to any country to support primary research. Visits are generally one week to six weeks in length, the key objective being to initiate one-to-one collaborations and explore opportunities to build lasting networks and gain access to ideas, research facilities and complementary equipment. Some of the projects funded in 2009 include:

MOBILITY GRANTS FOR THE SCIENCES

Dr Rachel Evans, Trinity College Dublin: ‘Self-assembled structured organic-inorganic nanocomposites for optoelectronic, photovoltaic and sensor applications’.

Dr Akintunde Babatunde, University College Dublin: ‘Assessing the suitability as a fertiliser and the environmental acceptability of phosphorus-saturated alum sludge previously used as a substrate in a constructed wetland system’.

Dr Jennifer McManus, National University of Ireland, Maynooth: ‘Measuring the mechanical properties of soft matter in vivo: cavitation rheology of the brain’.

Dr Robert Patrick Ryan, University College Cork: ‘The role of interspecies communication in influencing virulence, biofilm formation and antibiotic resistance of bacterial pathogens associated with cystic fibrosis’.

Dr Antoinette Fenny, Trinity College Dublin: ‘Determining an miRNA methylation signature and its significance in prostate cancer’.

MOBILITY GRANTS FOR THE HUMANITIES

Dr James Henahan, National University of Ireland, Maynooth: ‘Voltaire’s pamphlets for the Pays de Gex, 1763–75’.

Dr Liam Lenihan, University College Cork: ‘Epic art: the writings of James Barry’.

Dr Liam Weeks, University College Cork: ‘The party’s not over, but there’s life outside it: a comparative study of independent politicians in Ireland and Australia’.

Dr Antoinette Fenny, Trinity College Dublin: ‘Determining an miRNA methylation signature and its significance in prostate cancer’.

Appendix I—Members (corrected to July 2010)
Appendix V—Summary of Accounts for the year ended 31 December 2009

GENERAL PURPOSES CURRENT ACCOUNT

Income

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<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grant-in-aid</td>
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<tr>
<td>Entrance fees &amp; Members’ subscriptions</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sale of publications</td>
<td>352,547</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sale of proceedings</td>
<td>61,031</td>
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<td>Miscellaneous</td>
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<td>Department of the Gaeltacht</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total Income</strong></td>
<td><strong>4,851,756</strong></td>
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Direct Expenditure

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<th>Description</th>
<th>Amount</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Audit, law, bank, professional charges</td>
<td>20,925</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fuel &amp; light</td>
<td>29,654</td>
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<tr>
<td>Furniture, equipment &amp; household</td>
<td>51,161</td>
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<tr>
<td>Discoveries</td>
<td>16,347</td>
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<tr>
<td>Miscellaneous</td>
<td>54,059</td>
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<td>General insurance</td>
<td>10,766</td>
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<td>Information technology</td>
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<td>Supplementary pensions</td>
<td>140,863</td>
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<td>Postage and telephone</td>
<td>55,951</td>
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<tr>
<td>Printing administrative</td>
<td>13,227</td>
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<tr>
<td>Salaries &amp; wages</td>
<td>1,495,489</td>
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<td>Stationery &amp; office equipment</td>
<td>45,764</td>
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<tr>
<td>Training &amp; consultancy</td>
<td>63,817</td>
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<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>2,168,202</strong></td>
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Allocations to Special Accounts

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<tr>
<td>International Unions &amp; General Assemblies account</td>
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<td>Library account</td>
<td>514,275</td>
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<td>Prent proceedings account</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Account Description</th>
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<tr>
<td>General publications account</td>
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<td>Foclóir na Nua-Ghaeilge account</td>
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<td>Celtic Latin Dictionary account</td>
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<td>International Exchanges &amp; Fellowships account</td>
<td>28,264</td>
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<td>Irish Historic Towns Atlas account</td>
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<td>Dictionary of Irish Biography account</td>
<td>314,422</td>
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<td>Documents on Irish Foreign Policy account</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total of Allocations</strong></td>
<td><strong>2,322,774</strong></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

- **Total of Expenditure**: 4,473,511
- **Income**: 4,851,756
- **Expenditure**: 4,473,511
- **Surplus/(Deficit) EOY**: 378,245

The above accounts are shown on a cash receipts basis. Under the provisions of the Comptroller and Auditor-General (Amendment) Act 1993, the Academy's accounts are subject to audit on an accruals basis by the Comptroller and Auditor-General.

The Academy’s audited accounts for 2009 had not been received by the Academy from the Comptroller and Auditor-General’s Office up to the date of the Annual Review going to print.