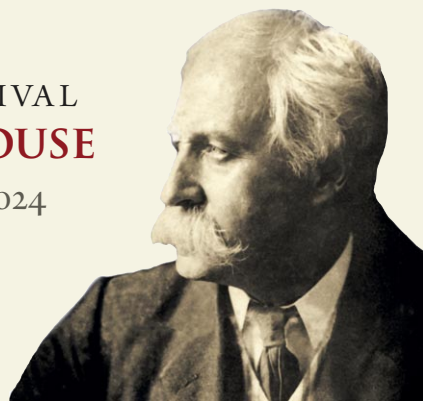




# OUR GREAT Disconnect

THE 16<sup>th</sup>  
PERCY FRENCH FESTIVAL  
**CASTLECOOTE HOUSE**  
17th/18th/19th/JULY 2024



# 'Where there's no connection, there's no protection.'

Will Storr, *The Status Game: On Social Position and How We Use It*, William Collins, Glasgow, 2021



No country can survive without a national identity and for centuries, Ireland's identity was inextricably connected with Catholicism/Christianity. The rulers of Modern Ireland, all its agencies including mainstream media are at war with our country's past and its belief systems, yet have failed to come up with a positive vision for what Ireland actually is or should be. As a result today we now define ourselves more by what we have rejected and why? The truth is Christianity will survive without Ireland, but Ireland without Christianity looks doomed.\*



Transhumanists see the natural biological limitations of man as problematic and advocate instead the use of technology to advance or supersede human effort and suffering, deifying its advances in the process. Despite advances we are becoming more and more disconnected from one another suffering energy depletion levels as a result, primarily because we have substituted interaction for social media. Our bodies exist on vibrational levels, love being the highest vibrational level. To maintain our energy levels we derive it not only from each other or food but from what, where or whom we centre our edification upon; the environment, workplace, education, entertainment and so on. If our energy levels are low our bodies suffer and low energy levels are directly related to stress and disease; computers, TV, bright screens have a negative impact on our energy levels and consequently our mental health.



'Our hunger to think and talk about the moral and the transcendent will never be sated' according to Augustine. Elevated language; poetry, songs, epic stories, prayer all exist on a high vibrational level, raising our consciousness and improving our mental health. When the great books are re-contextualised into the sociopolitical and cultural worlds of their time, by straining them of their mythical language they become more meaningful, powerful and accessible to all.



Percy French captured some extraordinary landscape scenes around Ireland, all involving the light in all its cycles; rising, setting, bursting forth or spilling down on what would often be a very mundane or ordinary setting, like a simple stream or wildflower gorse; it was as if he was saying 'this is who we are. this is the backdrop that begot us, hold onto our connection with it. In the midst of some bad planning decisions during the boom, we at the festival raised the question 'what has happened our honourable relationship with the land?' Today we may well ask 'is our disconnection from nature linked to a corresponding spiritual diminishment as well?' Alongside the climate crisis *is there not also a spiritual crisis, one directly related to our stewardship of nature?*



Many centres for leadership and group conversation have disappeared throughout Ireland, post offices, churches, community centres, acutely so in rural Ireland. The nature of our daily connection and communication has changed dramatically with technology and social media overtaking interaction. People now live alone, work alone, entertain themselves alone, travel alone and are more fragmented and atomised than ever before. As a result loneliness has become one of the silent taboo epidemics in Ireland with its impact on our mental and physical well being somewhat equivalent to diabetes or smoking 15 cigarettes a day.

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\*See James Bradshaw, 'Ireland's divorce from Catholicism has created a massive cultural vacuum', *Position Papers*, 28th October 2023, <https://positionpapers.ie>

# THE 16TH PERCY FRENCH FESTIVAL 2024

Honorary President of the Festival, the President of Ireland, Michael D Higgins  
Informed Social & Cultural Discussion of Ireland Today

## Our Great Disconnect

17TH | 18TH | 19TH | JULY 2024

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*Please be seated 15 minutes before the first talk each day*

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The Percy French Festival, registered address: as above  
Brochure created, compiled, and edited by Kevin Finnerty ©2024

Since 2009 The Percy French Festival has taken place annually  
at Castlecoote House, the home of the festival founder,  
Kevin Finnerty, whose father was a founder member  
of the Percy French Festivals of 1957 and 1958.



# *The Jarvey, 1889–1890: The Irish Punch?*

Although it was not until the early 1890s that William Percy French embarked on a career as a professional entertainer, for many years before this he had been delighting family, schoolmates, his fellow university students, work colleagues and a wide circle of friends and acquaintances with his versatility as a comic artist, with amusing songs (usually accompanied by playing the banjo) forming a prominent part of his humorous repertoire. As several scholars have noted, French was much keener on his comic performances than he was on his studies or the two main jobs that he worked at after eventually completing his engineering degree at Trinity College Dublin, firstly as apprentice engineer on the Midland Great Western Railway and then as a Board of Works inspector of loans to tenants in Co. Cavan in the 1880s.<sup>1</sup> When visiting farms in Cavan as a self-styled 'Inspector of Drains' French often travelled by tricycle or bicycle. Using cycles allowed French and his friend, J. W. Weekes, to visit more farms in a day than if they had relied on outside cars. French was also able to save the 9d. per mile travelling expenses which the Board of Works paid its officials. The time that the two friends saved as a result of cycling was devoted to one of their favourite pursuits, playing the fashionable game of tennis at country houses in Cavan.<sup>2</sup> Cycling was more than a mere utilitarian activity for French at this time, as evidenced by the fact in 1888 he also made occasional comic sketches to Ireland's only cycling newspaper, *The Irish Cyclist*, which was edited by a man who was soon to become a friend of French's, Richard James Mecredy. Mecredy was obviously impressed by French's contributions, because when French approached him towards the end of 1888 for a permanent post on *The Irish Cyclist* after his Board of Works employment was terminated, Mecredy responded instead by offering him the position of editor of a new weekly comic paper that he was about to publish, which was to be called *The Jarvey*.<sup>3</sup>

The first edition of *The Jarvey* was published on 3rd January 1889. (*Illus.* 1) Costing 2d., its contents consisted of one page of advertisements (many of which were for publications produced by Mecredy and Kyle, printers of *The Irish Cyclist*), with the rest consisting of a series of cartoons, drawings, jokes, comic poems and amusing comments on incidents of Irish life as well as events overseas.<sup>4</sup> This set the general pattern for *The Jarvey* for the two years of its existence. In order to drum up publicity, advance copies were sent to editors of the Irish national and provincial press. Several of these responded by printing their favourable impressions of the new publication, thereby helping to publicise it, but not all responses were complimentary. *Sport's* editor stated on 5th January that 'Some of the jokes I have seen before, while some of the others I do not even see now'.<sup>5</sup> However, he softened this by adding: 'All the same, here is luck and long life to *The Jarvey*'. The most negative review came from another Dublin publication, the society newspaper *Irish Society*, which was owned by the publisher Ernest Manico. The editor recorded his disappointment at *The*



Illus. 1. The title page of the first issue of *The Jarvey*, 3rd January 1889.

*Jarvey's* contents, opining that 'there is an utter absence of that spirit of humour which we think ought to actuate everything in its pages', and added that 'we hope for better things from its conductors, who, if they look for success, must reduce the price from two-pence to one penny, give more local colouring to their references to men and things, lighten its columns, and abstain from verbosity and cynicism'.<sup>6</sup>

This could not be seen as disinterested criticism, as it is likely that *Irish Society's* editor viewed *The Jarvey* as unwelcome competition. French was probably aware of *Irish Society's* negative comments, as *The Jarvey* later frequently poked fun at the contents of the former newspaper, which was thinly veiled as *Irish Sassiety* or *Hirish Sassiety*. One cannot be certain of the impact of *Irish Society's* negative review, but it certainly did not help to make French's publication attractive to its intended





# The Komieks are Koming!

THE KIJMACKS OF KOMEDY!

*Kaleidoskopik Kluster of Klever Komedians, Kornucopia of Kompllicated Konjuring, Kuaint Kantos by Knock-about Komets.*

KWEER KUIPS AND KURIOS KUIRKS KONVOKE  
KAKHINATORY KAKKLES.

KUANTITIES OF KATGUT, KAROLS AND  
KILLING KONUNDRUMS.

Katering for Kokettes, Kolonels, Kaptains,  
Klowns, Klerks, Klergy,  
Kadets, Kokkskombs, and Korner Boys.

Kapable Konstables Kontrol Klamorous Kads.

*Kome in Kabs, Kurrides, Karriages, Klothes-  
Horses, Karis, and Kanos.*

KOMMENCE AT 8 O'KLOKK.

KOME KWIKLY, KEEP KOMING.

KOME AT KOKK KROW.

KOME WHEN THE KURFEW KALLS

Kandid komments of klapping krowds, kooquer krowk  
ing kritika, and karry konviktion to kautious koon.

# Jarvey Concert,

THE ASSEMBLY ROOMS,

South Mall, Cork,

MAY 30th and 31st.

Admission, 1s. Reserved Seats, 2s.

Doors Open at 7.30. Performance at 8.

Letter' by the famous society columnist, Nannie Lambert Power O'Donoghue, from October 1889 to February 1890,<sup>10</sup> and 'Chit Chatters' by Ettie French from March 1890 onwards.<sup>11</sup> The ladies' column did not complement the rest of *The Jarvey* very well, as it rarely had any humorous content but focused instead on gossipy accounts of attendees at balls, soirées, race meetings, the theatre and various high-society get-togethers, mostly in Dublin. Ettie French's column was enlivened somewhat by the inclusion of numerous sketches that she herself had drawn, but apart from this the contents of her column differed little from those of her predecessors.<sup>12</sup>

The newspaper's price was lowered from 2d. to 1d. on 2nd February 1889. French announced that '*The Jarvey* finds his yoke so well patronised by the general public, and himself becoming so great a favourite with all classes, creeds, and cliques, that his Fare from this date will be the EVER-POPULAR PENNY'. This is not very convincing: if *The Jarvey* had been as popular as French claimed, there would have been no need to halve its price in this manner. The much-publicised opening of a kiosk on South Great George's Street in August 1889 should also be seen as a sign that the newspaper was struggling to attract sufficient custom from Dubliners, probably due to the

previously mentioned reluctance of shopkeepers in the capital to stock it. (Illus. 2) A series of publicity concerts by *The Jarvey* staff and others was probably the most innovative attempt to boost sales which French devised. (Illus. 3) French's troupe – which mainly consisted of French himself, Edward Radcliff (sometimes using the stage name of 'Mr Raymond, the topical songster'), Richard Orpen 'the Lightning Limner' and 'Professor Leozedt, the marvellous London Prestidigitateur' – performed

mostly at venues away from Dublin, a move which was probably prompted by disappointing sales in the capital. Reports in several newspapers show that these concerts were well received by audiences, and it is possible that they helped to increase its circulation outside of the capital.<sup>13</sup> The concerts also served as welcome topics for French to write about in *The Jarvey*, as he often struggled to find sufficient 'copy' to fill the newspaper's pages; indeed, French sometimes artfully used the theme of his writer's block to fill a few additional column inches.



The most important selling point of *The Jarvey* was undoubtedly its contents. French revealed himself to be an incredibly talented and inventive artist and hard-working editor when it came to filling *The Jarvey's* pages, with most of the numerous and varied limericks, comical fiction and jokes, and some of the drawings, coming from his pen.<sup>14</sup> (Illus. 4) It is possible that he modelled *The Jarvey* on the most famous British comic publication of the period, *Punch*, and that he hoped to replace it with *The Jarvey* as the entertainment newspaper of choice of Irish 'polite society'. This is suggested by a joke which was published in the newspaper on 27th April 1889: 'Why should *The Jarvey* be appreciated by all teetotalers?—Because it is endeavouring to drive away *Punch* from every Irish home'. French's admiration for *Punch* is indicated by the fact that in September and October 1890 he considered changing his newspaper's title to *The Irish Punch*, but abandoned the idea when most correspondents expressed themselves satisfied with *The Jarvey* as the title.<sup>15</sup> Although French did not change the title of *The Jarvey* to *The Irish Punch*, nevertheless *The Jarvey's* contents were very similar to those of the British comic newspaper. Robert Shail astutely writes about *Punch* that the target of many of its cartoons was 'the foibles of polite Victorian society, from modes of dress and speech to domestic family life'. A similar point may be made that *The Jarvey* focused on 'the foibles of polite Victorian [Irish] society, from modes of dress and speech to domestic family life'.<sup>16</sup>

*The Jarvey's* pages are replete with cartoons and drawings that are set in the drawing rooms, parlours and ballrooms of the Irish middle and upper classes. (Illus. 5) Other sketches have as their subject matter various outdoor social gatherings of polite society, such as fashionable lawn tennis meetings, dog shows, regattas and the Royal Dublin Society's annual horse show. The conversations between attendees at balls, 'At Homes' and other fashionable gatherings provided *The Jarvey*



with a rich vein of humorous content, with the newspaper often taking particular delight in mocking the affected accents and effete mannerisms of some of the men who attended these events. Illustrated reviews of opera performances and art exhibitions—mostly in Dublin, but occasionally in Belfast—were clearly pitched at an elite readership.<sup>17</sup> The servants and other domestic staff who constituted an important element of the domestic households of Irish polite society also featured frequently in the cartoons and comic written sketches of *The Jarvey*. It is not difficult to see why contemporaries sometimes referred to *The Jarvey* as ‘*The Irish Punch*’, a descriptive term that occasionally features in the pages of French’s newspaper.

The biggest difference between the two publications is that *The Jarvey* largely avoided contemporary politics in its pages. This was in stark contrast to *Punch*, which not only published an ‘Essence of Parliament’ column (‘Extracted from the Diary of Toby, M.P.’), which gave humorous summaries of each week’s proceedings in both houses of the Westminster parliament, but regularly commented on other political events, including Irish topics. French spelled out *The Jarvey*’s political stance—or, more correctly, its lack of one—in the newspaper’s very first issue. The publication’s opening sentence stated: ‘As it is possible that we may be accused of a want of crispness and distinctness in our remarks on contemporary politics, it is perhaps better that we should at once define that position which we shall for ever occupy in the eyes of the world.’ This was followed by a poem, ‘Political Creed’, which at first glance seemed to indicate that *The Jarvey* would have a Nationalist viewpoint. However, after readers read this poem they were then instructed

---

**THE PARLOUR ELOCUTION EVIL—LET IT BE SUPPRESSED.**



HOST—Ladies and gentlemen, my daughter, who belongs to the Geranium Amateur Dramatic Association, will now give the sleep-walking scene from “Macbeth,” and afterwards recite “Curfew Shall Not Ring To-night !”



“Out, damned spot—out, I say !”

---

TOP *Illus.* 4. Percy French at work on *The Jarvey*. Source: *The Jarvey*, 27th April 1889.

ABOVE *Illus.* 5. ‘The Parlour Elocution Evil—Let it be Suppressed.’ Cartoon in *The Jarvey*, 30th March 1889.

to re-read it with the second and third lines transposed, giving a radically different meaning to the poem. The version that was printed in *The Jarvey* follows on the left; the version with the lines transposed is on the right:

We hold the uncrowned King to be  
The saviour of our liberty:  
None other than a knave or fool  
Would ever combat Parnell's rule.

*The Jarvey's* columns do not mean  
To put the red above the green:  
To court and win the League's applause  
Is still consistent with the laws.

We love and venerate the man  
Who of Campaign adopts the Plan:  
Who gladly pays his landlord's rent,  
To Coventry should straight be sent.

When patriots'scape from Balfour's gripe  
We print the fact in larger type:  
We fringe with black our mournful sheets  
When Tories conquer Liberal seats.

That man we simply execrate  
Who fears to speak of '98:  
Who nurtures freedom's cherished dream,  
To him we give our best esteem.

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To him we give our best esteem.<sup>18</sup>

This cleverly constructed poem is only one of numerous examples in *The Jarvey* of French's skill as a wordsmith and his delight in playing with the English language.

Although *The Jarvey* proclaimed its political neutrality on a number of occasions, it did not entirely ignore the two major Irish political issues of the day, Home Rule and the land question. However, rather than address the issue of Home Rule directly, on a small number of occasions French playfully depoliticised the issue entirely by characterising 'Home Rule' as a domestic situation where wives tyrannised their husbands. (*Illus.* 6) French also published a number of humorous cartoons representing interactions between peasants and landlords, which again dodged the contentious issues which were involved in the land question. The main exception is a cartoon which was



**IS HOME RULE A FAILURE?**  
Mr. Peter Reilly begins to think there may be a reverse side to the medal.

published on 24th August 1889, which would not have been out of place in the anti-landlord *United Ireland* newspaper, which was edited by William O'Brien MP, one of the principal leaders of the Plan of Campaign agrarian agitation. (Illus. 7) It was not until the last two editions of *The Jarvey* that the newspaper focused on Home Rule in a direct fashion, when French published some amusing skits that poked fun at Parnellites (including Parnell himself) and anti-Parnellites in the wake of the split in the Irish Parliamentary Party. French evidently intended to continue with these skits, but they came to an end because Mecredy had decided that *The Jarvey* had reached the end of its natural life, '[t]he allotted life of a Dublin comic journal being two years'.<sup>19</sup> The 1890 Christmas special issue, titled 'French Plums', was French's last publication as *The Jarvey's* editor.<sup>20</sup> (Illus. 8)

Does the fact that *The Jarvey* usually ignored Ireland's major political controversies mean that it is not worth the historian's time in reading it? Far from it. Political historians will find much to interest them in French's comments on various minor political issues of the day, as well as his humorous (and occasionally abrasive) social commentary. Social and cultural historians will delight in his quirky recreation of the world of the Irish middle and landed classes, which is brought to life through a dazzling array of sketches, poems, cartoons, limericks, puns and comic short stories. Percy French once declared that 'I was born a boy and have remained one ever since'.<sup>21</sup> *The Jarvey's* pages testify to his boyish inability or refusal to take the world too seriously.

## Brian Griffin

ABOVE Illus. 6. Home Rule in action. Cartoon by Richard Caulfeild Orpen in *The Jarvey*, 3rd January 1889.

## NOTES

- 1 James N. Healy, *Percy French and His Songs* (Cork: Mercier Press, 1966), pp 4–30; Brendan O'Dowda, *The World of Percy French* (Belfast: Blackstaff Press, 1981), pp 5–12; Berrie O'Neill, *Tones that are Tender: Percy French 1854–1920* (Dublin: Lilliput Press, 2016), pp 35–63.
- 2 Emily de Burgh Daly (ed), *Chronicles and Poems of Percy French* (Dublin: Talbot Press, 1922), pp 50, 56–57, 101.
- 3 de Burgh Daly, *ibid*, pp 66–67. French's earliest *Irish Cyclist* piece appeared in the newspaper on 1st February 1888. It was a single page of cartoons from an illustrated story titled 'How I Didn't Find Stanley', a special issue of *The Irish Cyclist* which was produced to mark the opening of the Stanley Cycle Show, the largest cycling show in the United Kingdom. This page of cartoons was published in *The Irish Cyclist* to advertise the Stanley Show special issue; unfortunately, no copies of the latter publication appear to have survived.
- 4 Several examples are reproduced in Bernadette Lowry, *Sounds of Manymirth on the Night's Ear Ringing. Percy French (1854–1920): His 'Jarvey' Years and Joyce's Haunted Inkbottle* (Dublin: Self-published, 2021), pp 64–102.
- 5 French later gave a slightly different version of this quotation and ascribed it to Jakes McCarthy of *The Freeman's Journal*: de Burgh Daly, *Chronicles*, pp 67–68. French appears to have been mistaken, as one cannot locate this quotation in online searches of *The Freeman's Journal*. *Sport* was a companion newspaper to *The Freeman's Journal*.
- 6 *Irish Society*, 12th January 1889.
- 7 de Burgh Daly, *Chronicles*, p. 67.
- 8 *Evening Telegraph*, 7th May 1892.
- 9 The drawings were the work of Richard Caulfeild Orpen.
- 10 She wrote under the pseudonym of 'Angela', which French mistakenly referred to as 'Amazon' after she ceased writing the column.
- 11 Ettie wrote under the pseudonym of 'Magpie'.
- 12 Some of the text and drawings in the 'social diary columns' in *The Jarvey* are reproduced in reproduced in Lowry, *Sounds of Manymirth*, pp 69–72, 84.
- 13 The troupe's first performance was in Drogheda in February 1889. This was followed over the course of the following weeks by performances in Dundalk, Portadown, Lurgan, Lisburn, Belfast, Larne, Ballymena, Ballymoney, Coleraine, Derry, Omagh, Enniskillen, Dundrum (Co. Dublin), Dublin's Rotunda, Cork and Queenstown (Cobh today). Some concerts were also given in Kingstown (Dún Laoghaire today) in August 1889. The troupe began its 1890 concert tours in Cavan in April, before performing in Clones, Enniskillen, Omagh, Dungannon, Oldcastle, and Navan.
- 14 An admirer later wrote that 'the little paper seemed to suffer from a plethora of wit, and was crammed with such reckless profusion of good things that its jokes seemed to jostle each other in the brain of the reader': *Social Review*, 10th November 1894.
- 15 One reader mischievously suggested 'Potheen, or the Dublin Jarviari' as an alternative title: *The Jarvey*, 11th October 1890. This was a play on *Punch's* full title, which was *Punch, or the London Charivari*.
- 16 Robert Shail, "'For the Benefit of Old Boys, Young Boys, Odd Boys Generally, and Even Girls': The Irresistible Rise of the British Comic, 1884–1900", in John Storey (ed), *The Making of English Popular Culture* (London and New York: Routledge, 2016), p. 157.
- 17 Some of these are reproduced in Lowry, *Sounds of Manymirth*, pp. 88–91.
- 18 The 'League' that is mentioned in the second verse is the National League, the organisation that replaced the Land League in 1882 after the latter body was suppressed in 1881. It functioned as the 'party machine' of the Irish Parliamentary Party at the local level. The Plan of Campaign which is referred to in the third verse was an attempt by tenants on scores of estates to force their landlords to lower rents. The tenants combined to offer rents that they considered to be fair, and if these were refused the money was paid into a joint fund to support tenants who were evicted for non-payment of rent. It lasted from 1886 to 1891, with mixed results.
- 19 de Burgh Daly, *Chronicles*, p. 68.
- 20 French mistakenly stated that this was the Christmas 1891 issue. No copies of this publication appear to have survived.
- 21 de Burgh Daly, *Chronicles*, p. 2.



**THE YOUNG SQUIRE.**—"Here is an old ruin we have not explored yet, Miss Mary."  
**MISS MARY.**—"That is the Murphys' cottage, Mr. Blake; your agent explored it yesterday with a battering ram."

*Illus. 7. A comment on the Land War in *The Jarvey*, 24th August 1889.*



*Illus. 8. Front cover illustration 'French Plums', the 1890 final issue of *The Jarvey*, 27 December 1890.*



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JULY 17<sup>th</sup>

# WEDNESDAY



- 10.00 AM **Dr Brian Griffin**  
*The Jarvey, 1889–1890: The Irish Punch?*
- 10.45 AM **Dr Tony McCarthy**  
Percy French—A portrait of the Country House at play
- 11.30 AM TEA/COFFEE
- 12.00 PM **Dt Pauric Travers**  
Parnell and French
- 12.45 PM **Dr Kevin Kiely**  
Percy's Irish Irony: Close reading Percy French's lyrics  
with Pamela Brown's support in co-presentation
- 1.30 PM LUNCH
- 2.45 PM **Dr Pádraig Lenihan**  
The Battle of Aughrim 1691, History, Myth and Memory  
With some historical reenactment
- 3.30 PM GARDENS OPEN  
QUESTIONS & ANSWERS TO FOLLOW EACH TALK

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Battle of the Bands | Workshops for Children

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The preservation of this part of Ireland's cultural heritage is of national importance. This has been recognised by successive governments which have enacted legislation to help safeguard our historic houses for current and future generations and in the public interest.

Heritage properties remaining in private hands have unique value, especially those owned by the same family over generations.

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The HHI aims to promote and foster the immediate and long-term future of Irish privately owned historic properties. For further information on our members and activities please see [www.ihh.ie](http://www.ihh.ie)



JULY 18<sup>TH</sup>

# THURSDAY



- 10.00 AM **Dr Michael Hardiman**  
The Postmodern Condition and the end of Intimacy
- 10.45 AM **Dr Eve Watson**  
Sexuality, Identity and its Discontents in Contemporary Ireland
- 11.30 AM TEA/COFFEE
- 12.00 PM **James Bradshaw**  
The Human Person and Community
- 12.45 PM KEYNOTE ADDRESS  
**Former Taoisach Bertie Ahearn**  
Towards a vision for a New Ireland in the current landscape
- 1.30 PM LUNCH
- AFTERNOON RECITAL
- 2.45 PM **Don Baker**  
*Eileen Óg* reworked
- 3.30 PM GARDENS OPEN  
QUESTIONS & ANSWERS TO FOLLOW EACH TALK



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JULY 19<sup>th</sup>

# FRIDAY

Percy French, The Next Generation



- 10.00 AM **Louise Lennon**  
The Language of Adolescents
- 10.45 AM **Pearse O'Shiel**  
Educating for a Human Future
- 11.30 AM TEA/COFFEE
- 12.00 PM THE SEAN FREYNE MEMORIAL LECTURE  
**Dr Margaret Daly Denton**  
Caring for the Earth:  
How John can resource ecological commitment
- 12.45 PM **Panel Discussion, Chaired by Paul Healy**  
Paul Kningsnorth, Dr Margaret Daly Denton,  
Pearse O'Shiel, Lousie Lennon
- 1.30 PM LUNCH
- AFTERNOON RECITAL
- 2.45 PM **Michael Banahan**  
Percy French the Bob Dylan of the progressive era
- 3.30 PM GARDENS OPEN  
QUESTIONS & ANSWERS TO FOLLOW EACH TALK



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1935-2013

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Bertie served as Taoiseach from 1997 to 2007, during which Ireland saw remarkable economic growth, social change, and intense engagement with the Northern Ireland peace process that resulted in the Good Friday Agreement between the British and Irish Governments and the political parties in Northern Ireland. The Irish Presidency of European Council in 2004 saw him preside over the historic enlargement of the European Union to 27 member states including eight from Eastern Europe. Since being Taoiseach he has had leadership roles on key global issues including increasing aid to developing countries and tackling the spread of HIV Aids. His achievements at home and abroad have been recognized internationally. Bertie is one of the few to have been invited to address the Houses of Parliament in Westminster and the Houses of Congress in Washington DC. Since leaving Government in 2008 he has dedicated his time to conflict resolution and is actively involved with many groups around the world.



After a career spanning over 40 years as an accountant, stockbroker, and for the last 20 years running his own businesses, Tony received his PhD from Maynooth University in 2017. He is a former writer in residence in the Princess Grace Library, Monaco, and is currently a visiting fellow at the School of History in Newcastle University. His published works include *The Shaws of Terenure, A nineteenth-century Dublin merchant family* (2010), and *Land reform in the British and Irish Isles* (2022) coedited with Professor Annie Tindley and Dr Shaun Evans. His latest publication, *Land reform and legislation in Ireland 1800–1992*, in conjunction with Professors Terence Dooley and Annie Tindley, will be published later this year. He is a regular contributor to the *Irish Farmers Journal*, *Country Living* magazine, and other journals.

## DR MARGARET DALY-DENTON



Margaret's doctoral dissertation (on the textual origins of Christian ritual song) was mentored by Prof. Seán Freyne. During his illness and eventual retirement, she undertook his teaching of New Testament at TCD, and completed his posthumously published book, *The Jesus Movement and its Expansion: Meaning and Mission* (Eerdmans, Grand Rapids/MI Cambridge UK, 2014). She was instrumental in establishing The Freyne Library in TCD, Seán's gift of the life-long collection that had resourced his biblical scholarship. Assuming his mantle, teaching 'Bible and Ecology' in a Masters programme in Ecology and Religion, was a turning point in her own research and writing, opening up for her the possibility that the world's religious traditions might have a significant role in these days of ecological crisis by motivating their adherents to care for the planet. Her latest book, an earth-conscious reading of the Fourth Gospel, is *John: An Earth Bible Commentary: Supposing him to be the gardener* (Bloomsbury/T&T Clark, London, 2017).

## DR BRIAN GRIFFIN



Brian is an adjunct associate professor in the history department at Maynooth University, specialising in the social history of nineteenth and early twentieth century Ireland. He has a particular interest in the history of the Royal Irish Constabulary and Dublin Metropolitan Police, crime, and sport (especially cycling). Recent publications include articles on Percy French's war-related entertainments during the Great War, the bicycle in the Irish Revolution, Jack B. Yeat's *Punch* cartoons during the Great War and freak shows in 19th century Ireland. Work in progress includes articles on bicycle advertisements in the Second World War and street football in Ireland from the 1870s to the 1970s. His latest book, *Crime and the Criminal Classes in Ireland, 1870–1920*, will be published by Cork University Press in 2024.

## DR MICHAEL HARDIMAN



Michael holds a PhD in philosophy from NUIG. A native of Athlone where he was born into a business. He attended University in Galway, and postgraduate training in Counselling Psychology at University College Cork. He has written several books in the genre of psychology/personal development and was elected Fellow of the Irish Institute of Training and Development. For several years he served on the national executive of the Irish Association of Addiction Counselling. In addition to his work in the field of Psychology he has more recently engaged with formal training in political philosophy receiving both Master's and Doctorate degrees in this field. His recent book *The Path to Mass Evil: Hannah Arendt and Totalitarianism Today*, (2023, Routledge, New York) is currently available within the academy worldwide and his new book, *Misled? How Ideology Captures Your Mind*, is now available to general readership. Michael lives in Galway where he works as a psychologist and educator with a private counselling practice. He also presents seminars and workshops nationwide to family centres and to adult education services.

## DR EVE WATSON



Eve has been involved in psychotherapy practice, training, education, and research since 2005 and lectures in psychoanalysis and psychotherapy at undergraduate and postgraduate levels. She has a psychoanalytic practice in Dublin's city centre, and has published over 30 essays on sexuality, psychoanalysis, film, culture, and literature. She has held various journal editorship roles, and sits on editorial boards of several international journals. She co-edited the *Clinical Encounters in Sexuality* (2017, Punctum Books, New York) and she has two forthcoming book collections in 2024, one on the drive and the other on the contemporary relevance of Freud's major case studies. She is a Reg. Pract. member of APPI (Association for Psychoanalysis and Psychotherapy in Ireland), a member of ICP (Irish Council for Psychotherapy, and an honorary member of Lacan Toronto and the Northern Ireland Institute of Human Relations). In 2022, she was the Erik Erikson Scholar-in-Residence at the Austen Riggs Centre, Massachusetts. She is the course director of the Freud Lacan institute, Dublin which organises seminars and training programs.

## DR PAURIC TRAVERS



Pauric is an educationalist and historian. A graduate of UCD and the Australian National University, has lectured widely in Europe, the USA, and Australia. He was President of St Patrick's College, Drumcondra (1999–2012) and was a founding director of the Centre for Cross Border Studies in Armagh. He served two terms as chair of the Broadcasting Authority of Ireland, a member of the Teaching Council, and the board of the CAO. He is chairman of the Parnell Society and the first director of the Parnell Summer School. A former editor of *Studia Hibernica* (the Irish studies journal) he has served on editorial boards of other scholarly journals. He was a member of the Universities Ireland Historians Group on the Decade of Commemorations. His most recent book is *Donegal: the Irish Revolution 1912–23* (2022) and he contributed the Donegal entries on the UCC/RTE website *The Irish Civil War Fatalities Project*, launched this year. Other publications are: *Irish Culture and Nationalism 1750–1950* (1982); *Settlements and Divisions: Ireland 1870–1922* (1988); *The Irish Emigrant Experience in Australia* (1991); *Eamon de Valera* (1994); *The Ivy Leaf: the Parnells Remembered* (2007); *Words of the Dead Chief—Charles Stewart Parnell* (2009); *Parnell Reconsidered* (2013).

## JAMES BRADSHAW



James is a writer who frequently contributes to religious and secular publications including *Position Papers*, *Alive*, and *Mercator*, where he writes on topics such as politics, history, literature, culture, film and culture. His professional background spans the worlds of politics, public policy and corporate communications. A frequent speaker at the Clare Street Evenings cultural series in Dublin, his work on societal issues has appeared in leading outlets such as *The Irish Independent*, *The Sunday Independent* and *The European Conservative*. In 2023, he edited the special obituary edition of *Aid to the Church in Need's* *Mirror* publication which was focused on the life and legacy of Pope Benedict XVI. One of his key research interests in recent times has been the issue of community; on June 14th, he will deliver a lecture on the work of the prominent Irish communitarian and philosopher Desmond Fennell, during a seminar on Fennell's life and legacy which is taking place in Dublin.



## DR KEVIN KIELY



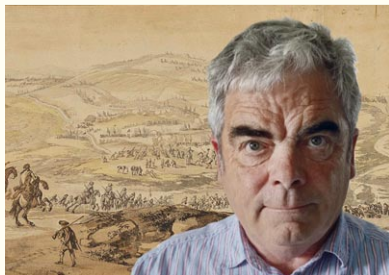
Kevin, born in County Down, who holds a PhD in modernist and postmodernist poetry, is a poet, a novelist, a literary critic, an American Fulbright Scholar. He is also a commentator on poetry, literature, and the arts in *Village Magazine*, *The Irish Independent*, *Books Ireland*, *The Journal of the E. E. Cummings Society*, *The International Wallace Stevens Journal*, and other publications. His many works include *Quintesse* (St Martin's Press, New York, 1985) and *Breakfast with Sylvia* (Lagan Press, Belfast, 2015) for which he was awarded the Patrick Kavanagh Fellowship in Poetry.

## PEARSE O'SHIEL



Pearse is chairman of Lifeways Ireland CLG the charity that achieved state recognition for the Steiner schools in Clare and Galway. He teaches in the areas of the philosophy of education with particular emphasis on Goethe's radical epistemology. He has worked over the past 35 years to support the establishment of alternative schools at kindergarten, primary, and secondary levels. He maintains a research interest that seeks to expose the assumptions that underpin the scientific and technological culture and mode of thought that has engulfed our lives with a view to exploring other ways of coming to know the world. Pearse is also chairman of Cooperative Housing Ireland and a founding member of Inis Housing Association. Currently he is preparing a series of online videos aiming to make his research accessible to a general audience.

## DR PÁDRAIG LENIHAN



Before becoming an academic Pádraig served in the army for 14 years, retiring at the rank of captain. He was a lecturer in history at the University of Galway until earlier this year. The study of European warfare in the period 1641–1715 forms the backbone of his research and writing career. This study includes weaponry, tactics, and manoeuvre (the ‘sharp end’ of warfare) alongside such societal questions as state-building, recruitment, logistics, disease, strategy and cultural issues such as memorialization and representation. His many military history publications include *Confederate Catholics at war, 1641–1649* (2001) and *1690 Battle of the Boyne* (2003). He also wrote *Consolidating conquest: Ireland 1603–1727* (2008) a survey of Irish history, and *The Last Cavalier: Richard Talbot (1631–91)* (2014) a biography of a pivotal and controversial figure. In 2018 he co-edited *Poema De Hibernia: A Jacobite Latin Epic on the Williamite Wars* which the editors believe to have been composed by Thomas Nugent of Pallas County Galway.

## LOUISE LENNON



Louise is Policy and Communications Officer of Irish Rural Links, a national network of organisations and individuals campaigning for sustainable rural development in Ireland and Europe. She represents IRL at Community & Voluntary (C&V) Pillar Bilateral meetings with various Government Departments and is the secretariat for the C&V Pillar Health Linkage Group. She is the C&V Pillar representative on the Public Participation Network National Advisory Group. She represents IRL on the Implementation Group of Our Rural Future, Ireland’s Rural Development Policy, the European Rural Parliament, and Coalition 2030, and supports the co-ordinator of the European Rural Communities Alliance. She is the IRL alternate for the Common Agricultural Policy Strategic Plan Monitoring Committee, PEACE IV, and Interreg VA monitoring committees. Louise has also worked on a number of EU Funded projects IRL has partnered on: RUBIZMO, SustainIT, and NICHE.

## DON BAKER



Dublin born Don is an blues musician, a singer-songwriter, a television personality and an actor. He plays guitar and harmonica—Mark Feltham (Oasis, Joe Cocker, and Rory Gallagher) rates him as the greatest acoustic harmonica player in the world, as do Charlie McCoy and Bono. He has appeared in several films, notably in *In the Name of the Father*, *On the Nose*, and *Mia, Liebe meines Lebens*.

‘You can hear Don’s hand on the guitar, the feeling coming from his voice. He’s a brilliant performer and what a great songwriter!’

Finbar Furey, *The Irish Times*.

‘A world class musician, a talented actor and a sound bloke!’

Ken Sweeney, Show Business Editor, *The Irish Sun*.

‘You can hear the gritty emotion in his playing, it isn’t phoned in, it is felt, experienced.’

Barry Egan, *Sunday Independent*.

His albums include:

*Almost Illegal* (1989)

*Miss You* (2000)

*Duckin’ & Divin’* (2003)

*Rain on the Wind* (2006)

*My Songs, My Friends* (2013)

## MICHAEL BANAHAN



From an early age Michael, a Roscommon native, has been singing and collecting songs. With many years involvement in the music business he has released a number of critically acclaimed albums: three solo; one with Irish folk duo The Baileys; and five with the internationally renowned folk group Rig the Jig of which he was a founding member. Michael has a passion for writing story songs. He is the founder of GoodWood Music, a record label set up to support original Irish talent from all genres of music. The label releases records worldwide through partner ships developed in the UK and the USA.

His solo albums include:

*Tecumseh Valley*, 2014

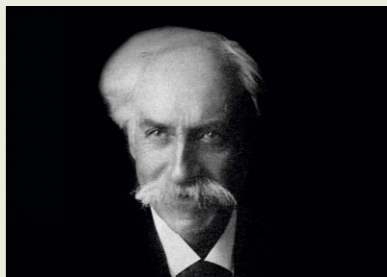
*Liften’ of the Latch*, 2014

## PAUL HEALY



Paul grew up in Rooskey, Co. Roscommon. Having previously worked for the *Longford Leader* and *Longford News*, he spent sixteen years as Editor of the *Roscommon Champion*, before launching the *Roscommon People* with his wife, Fiona, in 2007. Paul is Managing Editor of the *Roscommon People*. For many years he edited the *Roscommon Association Yearbook*. He is author of five books to date, on subjects ranging from sport to politics to social history, and also an occasional contributor to *Phoenix* magazine.

## PERCY FRENCH



French, the son of an Anglo-Irish landlord, was born in Cloonyquin, Co. Roscommon. While studying at Trinity College Dublin, he wrote the song *Abdul Abulbul Amir* which became hugely popular; he missed out on royalties having sold the publishing rights. In 1881, on graduating as a civil engineer he became 'Inspector of Drains' for County Cavan's Board of Works. A prolific painter of watercolour landscapes, he considered art to be his vocation. He first became celebrated for his songwriting, including *Phil the Fluther's Ball*, *Slattery's Mounted Foot*, and lyrics of *The Mountains of Mourne*. His song *Are Ye Right There Michael?* ridiculed the County Clare Railway company which sued him for libel. On being asked why he had arrived late for the hearing, French replied 'Your honour, I traveled by the West Clare Railway'. The case was dismissed. As a well-known entertainer his paintings became sought after; they remain so today, attracting high prices at leading auction houses. In 1920, in Glasgow, while performing, he took ill and died some days later. He was 65.







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