

HEDGE
SCHOOL



THE IRISH ASSOCIATION
for cultural, economic and social relations

'Too many histories'? - surveys of the past generation

Ireland's only illustrated history magazine, *History Ireland*, joined with the Irish Association for Cultural, Economic & Social Relations (*The Irish Association*) to mark their 20th and 75th birthdays with a special **Hedge School** on **Thursday 16 May 2013 at 7 pm**. The event took place at the **Royal College of Physicians, Kildare Street, Dublin 2** and was supported by the Reconciliation Fund of the Dept of Foreign Affairs).

The panel included **Prof Joe Lee** (New York University) *Ireland 1912-1985: Politics and Society* (1990), **Éamon Phoenix** (Queen's University Belfast, Stranmillis) *Northern Nationalism: Nationalist Politics, Partition and the Catholic Minority in Northern Ireland 1890-1949* (1994), **Prof Diarmaid Ferriter** (University College Dublin) *The Transformation of Ireland 1900-2000* (2004), and **Mary Cullen** (NUI Maynooth) *Telling It Our Way: Essays in Gender History* (2013).

Give it a rest?

When Alfred Cope, a former British assistant undersecretary in Dublin Castle, was approached in the 1940s to give a statement to the Bureau of Military History (BMH) he refused, saying 'Ireland has too many histories: she deserves a rest'.

Making sense of the 'big picture'

With the 'decade of centenaries' already underway, and with a seemingly endless stream of history titles rolling off the presses, how is the general public to make sense of it all? With the proliferation of scholarly monographs, not to mention the opening up of new archive sources (like the BMH), are we in danger of losing sight of the 'big picture'?

Writing history in the roller-coaster generation

To address this question *History Ireland* editor Tommy Graham convened a special Hedge School bringing together some of the country's foremost historians. All of them have published over the past roller-coaster generation that witnessed the end of the Troubles in the North, the rise of the Celtic Tiger...and its catastrophic collapse. How has scholarship of the 'revolutionary decade' - Home Rule crisis, First World War, 1916 Rising, War of Independence, Civil War and Partition - evolved over that period? What insights has the burgeoning of women's history brought to

the debate? Given that we have two jurisdictions on this island should we have one history or two?

The organisers

History Ireland was first published in spring 1993 'to bring Irish history out of the ivory tower and to make the latest research available to the widest possible readership'. Originally published quarterly, but since 2005 bimonthly, each issue covers a wide variety of topics, from earliest times to the present day, in an effort to give the reader a sense of the past but also to offer a contemporary edge. Each article is illustrated with photographs, maps or paintings to provide a vivid impression of the topic. Contributors have included academic historians, poets and writers, journalists and broadcasters, as well as young scholars and local historians.

The principal objective of *The Irish Association* is the promotion of communication, understanding and co-operation between all the people of Ireland. It is a non-party political and non-sectarian All Island organisation with the aim 'to make reason and goodwill take the place of passion and prejudice in Ireland, North and South'. With the support of notable members of the unionist and nationalist communities throughout the island, The Irish Association was founded in 1938. During the past 75 years, The Irish Association has made a real contribution to the growth of tolerance, reconciliation, mutual trust and human rights; the record of seminars, interactive dialogues and conferences attached indicates the Association's capacity to sustain and develop this contribution.

The Hedge School

Harking back to the unofficial schools of the eighteenth and nineteenth century, where wandering masters taught in improvised surroundings, the Hedge School aims to bring the *History Ireland* ethos to an audience setting - the 'live show'. Since debuting at the Electric Picnic in 2010, the Hedge School has developed a format - a mixture of an expert panel and active audience participation - with a wide appeal.