

IRISH HUMANITIES ALLIANCE

ANNUAL REPORT

2021

Irish Humanities Alliance



About the Alliance:

The [Irish Humanities Alliance \(IHA\)](#) was established in September 2013 as an all-island initiative of humanities researchers within 11 higher education and research institutions, including 10 universities across the island and the Royal Irish Academy (RIA) which hosts and supports the IHA. In the eight years since it was established, the IHA has developed an excellent working relationship with key national stakeholders and in 2015 was a founding member of the [European Alliance for Social Sciences and Humanities \(EASSH\)](#), of which it remains an active member.

The IHA provides a platform for humanities research advocacy, collaboration and consultation, on an all-island basis and at EU level. As a priority, the IHA has actively engaged with National Experts, National Delegates and National Contact Points in Ireland and Northern Ireland to bring an effective, co-ordinated humanities response to bear on draft EU Work Programmes in *Horizon 2020* and its successor *Horizon Europe*.

We are also working to promote the value of arts and humanities research and teaching. The IHA's website showcases '[Impact Case Studies](#)' which document the wider social, economic and cultural impact of humanities research on the island of Ireland. Furthermore, the IHA's [Humanities blog](#) is a collection of humanities perspectives and comment pieces on news, current affairs and academic debates. The blog covers the full range of humanities subject areas and, as of December 2021, there have been a total of 90 submissions (with 56 posted to the regular blog, 17 to the 'Covid19 and the humanities' series and 17 published as part of the 'busy season' collection). In addition, there have been 27 submissions made to the IHA's '[The Humanities and Me](#)' series which aims to highlight the contribution of the arts and humanities to public and cultural life on the island and further afield.

This short document aims to provide an overview of the IHA's activities during 2021.

Part One: January- June 2021:

The ongoing Covid-19 pandemic continued to dominate the IHA's work during the first half of 2021. Consequently, all IHA meetings and events scheduled for the first part of the year would again take place virtually, in line with public health advice. In 2021 the IHA prioritised its long-term strategic objectives with all-island collaboration, *Horizon Europe*, Open Access and Research Excellence dominating the agenda for 2021. We also had our deferred 2020 annual conference, 'Exciting News! Event, Narration and Narrative from past to present', to look forward to in March (albeit virtually).

At the beginning of the year the IHA [welcomed the announcement](#) that, post-Brexit, the Government of Ireland would fund the continued participation of Northern Ireland based students in the Erasmus+ programme from September 2021. As an all-island body we welcomed this move as an investment in Northern Ireland students and as an important element in fostering continued all-island collaboration in Higher Education. In January the IHA also welcomed the announcement of [increased funding for the Irish Research Council](#) as an investment in the future of Irish research excellence and urged the Council to consolidate funding of humanities research. We also endorsed the joint IRC-RIA 'Research for Public Policy' initiative and made a submission to the RIA's Higher Education Futures consultation.

The IHA also remained active in the policy eco-system. In May we responded to a request for a written submission to the Oireachtas Joint Committee on Education, Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science as part of its scrutiny of the HEA Bill 2021. In June the IHA also submitted a response to the consultation on National Research and Innovation Strategy.

Some notable events and initiatives are listed below:

1. IHA Annual Conference: 'Exciting News! Event, Narration and Narrative from past to present', 15-16 March

In March the IHA, and the IRC funded University College Cork (UCC) EURONEWS project, were delighted to present the deferred 2020 annual conference entitled- ['EXCITING NEWS! Event, Narration and Impact from Past to Present'](#). The conference brought together a broad range of current research in Ireland, and further afield, regarding an issue of crucial importance for the understanding of past cultures and our own.

Given the ongoing seriousness of the pandemic, and public debate surrounding 'trusted' news sources, the role of social media in circulating information, rumour and comment, and analysis of the question of expertise, the IHA's conference theme was a timely intervention. Attendees heard an excellent keynote by Prof. Jane Chapman, Professor of Communications, University of Lincoln, and



range of humanities perspectives from each of the panels:

- Circulation and Reception
- Balloons, Ballads, Boats, Bytes and Brexit: Irish Sea Media;
- Early Modern News;
- Troubling News in the Spanish Monarchy;
- Wars- at home and abroad;
- News and Multimedia;
- Tales of the City;
- Rumor and Belief; and
- Trouble in the Headlines

The conference provided for two full days of stimulating discussion encompassing the full range of humanities disciplines. Recordings of all ten panels, including the keynote address by Prof. Jane Chapman, 'Challenges Beyond the News : the Rediscovery of Neglected Voices', are available on the IHA's [YouTube channel](#).

2. *Open Access and the Humanities*



The image is a blue rectangular poster for a webinar. At the top left, there is a yellow box with the word 'Webinar' in blue. Below this, the title 'Open Access and the Humanities:' is written in large white font, followed by the subtitle 'A dialogue on future directions for Ireland' in a smaller white font. On the left side, the date and time are listed: 'Date: Wednesday 25 August' and 'Time: 11.00-13.00'. On the right side, there are two logos: the 'Alliance Irish Humanities' logo, which is a circular emblem with the text 'ALLIANCE IRISH HUMANITIES' around a central graphic, and the 'NORF NATIONAL OPEN RESEARCH FORUM' logo, which consists of the acronym 'NORF' in large letters above the full name.

Open Access has been a priority for the IHA throughout 2021. On 10 April the IHA's working group on open access policy published [a position paper](#) outlining the perspectives of the humanities research community on the shift to open access. The document called for a balanced transition that is responsive to the diversity of research fields, the specific publishing practices of the humanities disciplines, and publishers that advance knowledge in highly specialised arts and humanities disciplines. The IHA

circulated its position paper to relevant bodies and subsequently entered into discussions with the National Open Research Forum engaged proactively with the IHA's position paper. The National Open Research (NORF) Coordinator, Dr Daniel Bangert on the concerns that were raised in our paper.

Dr Bangert subsequently accepted an invitation to attend the IHA's April 2021 Board meeting where he thanked the IHA for its timely intervention and invited the Alliance to engage with the NORF open consultation ahead of its 7 May deadline. It was agreed that the IHA and NORF would collaborate on a joint event ahead of the next academic year to facilitate further engagement on this critical issue.

3. *'Horizon Europe and the Humanities: What to expect?'*, 26 April

With the launch of the EU's new research funding programme *Horizon Europe* in February 2021, the IHA put together an information session for the humanities research community on the island. This event aimed to build understanding of the programme and raise awareness of how the arts and humanities are present across all each of the pillars. In excess of 160 researchers, from institutions across the whole island, attended the session.



Joseph Moore, Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science, opened the event and introduced our panel of speakers:

- **Dr Gabi Lombardo**, Director European Alliance for the Social Sciences and Humanities;
- **Dr Geraldine Canny**, former National Contact Point for MSCA;
- **Prof. Seán Ryder**, Irish national expert to H2020 Programme Committee for SC6
- **Sarah Jayne Smith**, European and International Research Manager in AHSS at QUB, Northern Ireland Contact Point for Arts Humanities and Social Sciences; and
- **Garrett Murray**, National Director for Horizon Europe at Enterprise Ireland

We are grateful to each of the panellists, and all attendees, for contributing to such an informative and engaging session. As a priority, the IHA will continue to engage with Irish national experts, delegates, contact points and other relevant stakeholders in the development of *Horizon Europe* and will work to promote the engagement of the Irish humanities research community in the programme.



Panel for the IHA's 'Horizon Europe and the Humanities' event on 26 April 2021

4. *'Humanities for the Anthropocene', 7 May 2021*

'Humanities for the Anthropocene', a research snapshot and networking day, was co-organised by the IHA's Environmental Humanities Working Group and UCC's College of Arts, Celtic Studies & Social Sciences and Environmental Research Institute. The event attracted over 60 scholars, from across the whole island of Ireland, who are working from environmental humanities and related perspectives. A book of abstracts from the event is available [here on the IHA website](#). The event encompassed two plenary sessions in addition to two separate breakout sessions that focussed on the following themes:

- Building a lexicon: key terms across fields and disciplines;
- Locating our research: rethinking local/global, online/offline relationships;
- Teaching the Anthropocene: implications for pedagogy (UG and PG);
- Beyond the university: partnerships for research and action; and
- Creative practice, performance and poetics for the Anthropocene



Plastic bag image used in event publicity

The event aimed to strengthen connections, on an all-island basis, between researchers across the arts and humanities disciplines whose research is concerned with the human and cultural dimensions of climate breakdown, environmental destruction, biodiversity loss, and the wider issues associated with the Anthropocene.

In 2022, the IHA's Environmental Working Group will publish a document related to the Humanities and the Anthropocene research dialogue and networking event and will continue to engage the Irish humanities research community in the challenges of climate change, biodiversity loss, and environmental justice.

Part Two: June-December 2021:

5. *The Humanities and Open Access event, 25 August*

In August, the IHA and NORF co-organised 'Open Access and the Humanities: a dialogue on future directions for Ireland' as an online workshop. The purpose of this event was to translate the concerns of the Irish arts and humanities community, around Open Access, as outlined in the IHA's Position Paper and submissions to the NORF Landscape Report consultation, into suggested solutions that can be considered by NORF in the transition to Open Access.

The two-part workshop began with an overview, by an expert panel, of the relevant issues and recent developments in Open Access and the Humanities. The expert panel updated attendees on the current

state of play with regard to Open Access and latest developments in the EU, the United Kingdom and further afield. The panel comprised:

- **Martin Paul Eve**, Professor of Literature, Technology and Publishing at Birkbeck, University of London;
- **Gabi Lombardo**, Director of the European Alliance for Social Sciences and Humanities (EASSH); and
- **Pierre Mounier**, Deputy Director of Open Edition and Coordinator of OPERAS (EU infrastructure for open scholarly communication in the Social Sciences and Humanities).

A recording of this expert panel is available on the [IHA's YouTube channel](#).

Breakout sessions were then organised to help elicit suggestions for strengthening the supports for Open Access publishing in the arts and humanities. The breakout sessions focussed on how to make Open Access more inclusive for arts and humanities researchers, focusing on: the publishing practices that are unique to arts and humanities researchers; particular funding challenges and/or other obstacles to publishing Open Access; and positive actions that can be taken to make Open Access policies and support more inclusive.

Discussions have contributed to a policy brief being developed by NORF on support for diverse publishing practices (bibliodiversity) in the Irish landscape. The IHA will continue to engage with NORF.



6. *Creating Our Future, IHA brainstorm session, 22 October*

The 'Creating Our Future: a national conversation on research' campaign provided an opportunity for the public to submit research ideas for consideration by Irish researchers. The campaign aimed to raise awareness of Irish research and submissions were invited by a deadline of 30 November 2021. According to the Creating our Future [website](#), 'all ideas submitted will help to inspire researchers to make a better future for Ireland'.

With this in mind, the IHA felt that it was appropriate to bring together arts and humanities researchers to consider areas relevant to arts and humanities fields. We did this with the aim of encouraging the arts and humanities community as a whole to engage with the 'Creating our Future' campaign ahead of the 30 November deadline.

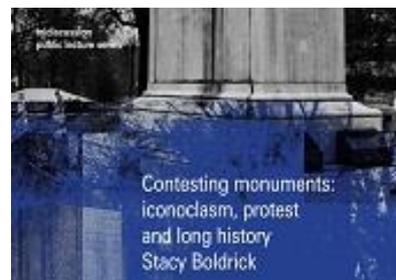


A sample range of questions gathered during the IHA session is available [here on the IHA website](#). We are especially grateful to IHA Board member Prof. Prof. Marie-Louise Coolahan for representing the IHA on the Advisory Forum to the Government's National Campaign on Research.

7. *In / Discussion Lecture Series*

For the academic year 2021-22, the IHA is co-hosting a cross-disciplinary online public lecture series with our colleagues in TU Dublin. The series, *in / discussion*, reflects on contemporary issues and current research in art, design, visual, material and spatial cultures. This includes memorial, commemorative and representative practices, related pedagogies and philosophies and wider concerns of society, social media and technology.

On 13 October we were delighted to host the first lecture in the series with **Prof. Jay Winter**, Harvard, Charles J. Stille Professor Emeritus. Prof. Winter delivered a lecture entitled 'All the things we cannot hear: The edges of memory'. The second lecture in the series was delivered by **Dr Stacy Boldrick**, University of Leicester, Museum Studies, on 10 November. We thank both speakers for their fascinating lectures and for contributing to an engaging discussion.



8. *All-Island Collaboration, August-November*

Building on the all-island vision for the humanities, as articulated in the 2019 IHA strategy document [By Imagination We Live](#), and the setting up of a new IHA North-South Working Group in 2020, fostering deeper all-island arts and humanities collaboration remained a priority for the IHA throughout 2021. With the election of Dr Maxim Fomin, Ulster University, as IHA Vice-Chair in August 2021, the Alliance now has a Chair in each jurisdiction.

Furthermore, the IHA responded to the August 2021 announcement of the North-South Research Programme which aimed to support the deepening of links between higher education institutions, researchers and research communities across the island. The scheme arose from the Government of Ireland's [Shared Island initiative](#). With Board approval, the IHA Executive and the North-South Working Group worked hard to put together a strong and comprehensive application, integrating various synergies existing within the IHA, and addressing a significant gap in the all-island research eco-system as it currently exists. This work was a priority for the IHA from the beginning of August through to the 8 November deadline. The Executive wish to thank all Board members who contributed to the development of the proposal. The outcome will be announced in 2022.

9. EASSH General Assembly, 4 November

The EASSH General Assembly 2021 took place both on-line and in person (in Brussels) on 4 November. Both IHA Director Mel Farrell and IHA Chair Chris Williams joined the meeting virtually. There were presentations from senior representatives of the European Commission, the EASSH Governing Board and other members of the Alliance and the whole event was coordinated and led by Dr Gabi Lombardo, Director of EASSH, with her customary flair and energy. Dr Jennifer Edmond of TCD (President of DARIAH-EU - the Digital Research Infrastructure for the Arts and Humanities) was elected to the Board of EASSH. Our congratulations to Jennifer on this important new opportunity.

As a founding member of EASSH, the IHA has remained an active and committed member of this body. We are especially grateful to EASSH Director Dr Gabi Lombardo for her engagement all through 2021, not least for her participation in our *Horizon Europe* and Open Access events.

In Conclusion, Looking ahead to 2022

The IHA plans an active programme of work in 2022. The IHA is [currently inviting proposals](#) for its next **Annual Conference**, to take place in 2022 (in person or hybrid depending on the guidelines then in place) and underwritten up to €3,500. The successful applicants will propose an overall conference theme that is inter- and trans-disciplinary and open to the broad spectrum of humanities fields – i.e. the conference theme must be open to a broad range of humanities disciplines: classics; ethnomusicology; history; languages; literature; philosophy etc.

The IHA is also planning a **Doctoral Training** event, on the themes of publication; and public humanities, for Friday 18 February. The training events will encompass academic journals; monographs; open access; the peer-review process; in addition to blogs; media; podcasting and social media. Further details will be published in due course.

The IHA can also confirm the next two speakers in its *in / discussion* online public lecture series organised in partnership with TU Dublin. Sasha Costanza-Chock, a communications scholar, participatory designer, and activist, is scheduled to speak in February 2022 while Krista Angelique Thompson, Professor of Art History, is due to speak in March. Further details will be posted in January 2022.

In addition, the IHA also plans to complete three strands of work that have been ongoing. This work includes **publishing three reports** on

- environmental humanities;
- research funding for the humanities in Ireland; and
- a research snapshot of medical humanities research across the island of Ireland;

In 2022 the IHA will continue to work with its partners and key stakeholders in all areas of national and European policy relevant to the arts and humanities. It will continue to work towards promoting the value of the arts and humanities and serving the interests of the all-island humanities research community.

IHA Member Institutions in 2021:

Dublin City University

Maynooth University

NUI Galway

Queen's University Belfast

Royal Irish Academy

Technological University Dublin

Trinity College Dublin

Ulster University

University College Cork

University College Dublin

University of Limerick

Select IHA Meetings and Events in 2021:

- 5 February IHA Board meeting (virtual);
- 15-16 March Annual Conference, 'Exciting News! Event, Narration and Impact from Past to Present';
- 23 April IHA Board meeting (virtual);
- 26 April '*Horizon Europe* and the Humanities: what to expect';
- 7 May 'Humanities for the Anthropocene: research networking event';
- 25 August 'Open Access and the Humanities: a dialogue on future directions for Ireland';
- 24 September IHA Board meeting (virtual);
- 13 October *In / discussion* Lecture One: Prof. Jay Winter, 'All the things we cannot hear';
- 22 October 'Creating Our Future: online arts and humanities brainstorming session';
- 4 November EASSH General Assembly (virtual);
- 10 November *In / discussion* Lecture Two: Dr Stacy Boldrick, 'Contesting Monuments';

IHA Executive Members, December 2021:

Prof. Chris Williams (UCC, Chair)

Dr Maxim Fomin (UU, Vice-Chair)

Dr Mel Farrell (IHA, Director)

Further information

Irish Humanities Alliance – Promoting the Value of the Humanities

19 Dawson Street, Dublin 2, Ireland

T. +353 1 609 0666 E. info@irishhumanities.com

Twitter: @IrishHumanities

