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# Among School Children

Kelly Matthews

*Framingham State University*, [kmatthews@framingham.edu](mailto:kmatthews@framingham.edu)

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Irlandeses) was founded in December, 1989.”

Additionally, the University of Sao Paulo (USP), in agreement with the Embassy of Ireland in 2009, established the William Butler Yeats Chair of Irish Studies. The Brazilian embassy in Ireland commented, “The W.B. Yeats Chair aims to organize events related to research, promotion and dissemination of Irish Studies in the undergraduate and graduate levels, such as conferences, seminars, conferences and roundtables, as well as to promote interchange between Irish and Brazilian professors in the fields of Irish literature and culture.”

**MUNIRA H. MUTRAN, LAURA P.X. IZARRA, AND BEATRIZ KOPSCHITZ X. BASTOS, EDITORS**

A GARLAND OF WORDS,  
FOR MAUREEN O'ROURKE MURPHY  
HUMANITAS (BRAZIL), 2011  
AVAILABLE THROUGH THE IRISH LITERARY  
SUPPLEMENT FOR \$30; \$40 OUTSIDE U.S.

*A Garland of Works* is a collection of literary texts and essays by some of the best scholars and cultural figures in the field to celebrate Maureen O'Rourke Murphy's outstanding career in the field of Irish Studies. There are nine sections to the book, featuring

“Memory,” “Culture and History,” “Poetry,” “Drama,” “Fiction,” “Irish Writing and Folklore,” “Documents of the Self,” “Anthologies and Dictionaries,” and “Reviews,” the last being essays on each of Murphy's publications.

Having known Maureen Murphy for almost forty years, it's silly to pretend to write a Johnny-I-Hardly-Knew-You review of this book. I'm not alone. Indeed, there is hardly a student or scholar of Irish Studies that hasn't at some point run across Maureen at a conference, a classroom, or a pub. The lady gets around.

Maureen, who teaches at Hofstra University on Long Island, is a past president of the American Conference for Irish Studies (ACIS) and a past chair of the International Association for the Study of Irish Literatures (IASIL). She serves on the boards of the American Irish Historical Association and Emerald Isle Immigration Center. She was one of the senior editors of the *Dictionary of Irish Biography*, published by the Royal Irish Academy and Cambridge University Press (2009). She edited Asenath Nicholson's *Annals of the Famine in Ireland* (1998) and *Ireland's Welcome to the Stranger* (2002); Annie O'Donnell's *Your Fondest Annie* (2005), and, with James MacKillop, *Irish Literature: A Reader* (1987, 2006). She is

currently writing a biography of Nicholson. Maureen directed the New York State Great Irish Famine Curriculum Project (2001), which won the National Conference for the Social Studies Excellence Award in 2002. She was also the historian of the Irish Hunger Memorial in Battery Park City, New York.

Some of the most poignant essays are in the “Memory” chapter. Biographical essays by Robert Rhodes, James MacKillop, Alan Singer, and J.J. Lee recount Maureen's beginnings as a student at SUNY Cortland, her achievements in the American Conference for Irish Studies, her work integrating the famine into the curriculum of New York State schools, and her contribution to the creation of the Irish Hunger Memorial in New York City.

Among the essayists are Margaret Mac Curtain, Declan Kiberd, Fintan O'Toole, Wolfgang Zach, Rhona Richman Kenneally, Maurice Harmon, Edna Longley, Lucy MacDiarmid, Ann Saddlemeyer, Christopher Murray, John Harrington, Mary Helen Thuente, Nicholas Grene, David Morse, Riana O'Dwyer, Heniz Kosok, Michael Kenneally, Margaret Kelleher, Catherine Shannon, James McGuire – and that's only about half of them.

Additionally, there are poems by Michael Longley, Eiléan Ní Chuilleanáin, Nuala Ní

Dhomhnaill, Macdara Woods, and Vincent Woods. It's hard to find another book with so many gifted contributors.

The book is published in Brazil, and because of currency restrictions and for ease of mailing, the *ILS* will ship this book. Make checks to Irish Studies, \$30 U.S. and \$40 outside U.S. Checks should be in U.S. dollars on a U.S. bank.

**MARIANNA GULA, MÁRIA KURDI, AND ISTVÁN D. RÁCZ, EDITORS**

THE BINDING STRENGTH OF IRISH STUDIES,  
FESTSCHRIFT IN HONOUR OF CSILLA BERTHA  
AND DONALD E. MORSE  
INSTITUTE OF ENGLISH AND AMERICAN STUDIES,  
UNIVERSITY OF DEBRECEN, HUNGARY, 2011

*The Binding Strength of Irish Studies* brings together 26 scholars and poets to honor two standouts in the field on the occasion of 65<sup>th</sup> (she) and 75<sup>th</sup> birthdays (he), and, coincidentally, their 25<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary. They met at an IASAIL conference in 1984 and were married two years later. Throughout their long careers, they have taught many courses, supervised several dissertations, and enriched the field of Irish-Hungarian studies.

—New York

## Among School Children

BY KELLY MATTHEWS

THE COVER OF Maurice Fitzpatrick's book *The Boys of St. Columb's* carries an epigraph from Seamus Heaney's poem “From the Canton of Expectation”: “They would banish the conditional forever, this generation.” This line is especially appropriate to the book's focus on those Northern Irish political and cultural leaders (Heaney among them) who were among the first generation of Northern Ireland pupils to receive free grammar school education under the United Kingdom's Education Act of 1947.

**MAURICE FITZPATRICK**  
*THE BOYS OF ST. COLUMB'S*  
LIFEY; DUFOUR EDITIONS, 2010, \$32.95

Fitzpatrick's thesis, that the Education Act itself made the Northern Irish civil rights movement possible some twenty years later, is borne out through transcriptions of interviews with eight of the most illustrious alumni of St. Columb's Catholic grammar school for boys in Derry City: Bishop Edward Daly; SDLP leader and Nobel Peace Prize winner John Hume; poet and Nobel laureate Heaney; critic Seamus Deane; diplomat James Sharkey; activist Eamonn McCann; and musicians Phil Coulter and Paul Brady.

The interviews themselves are the heart of the book, and Fitzpatrick does well to transcribe them in such a way that each man speaks to readers in his own voice. Heaney's voice comes through particularly clearly, as when he describes his first arrival at St. Columb's as a young boarder, age eleven: “It was soul-marking, the day I came to Derry with my father and mother. ... But of course what I remember most about that day was the moment when they had to leave. They walked

down the path towards the gates, and that really was a very hoesick, sad moment of loss” (59). One is reminded here, as at other moments in the book, of the young Stephen Dedalus' most poignant experiences at Clongowes Wood College in the opening chapter of *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*. Fitzpatrick's skills as an interviewer



are evident, and he knows when to get out of the way and let his subjects describe their own memories, as well as their views of Derry, Northern Ireland, the civil rights movement, and the importance of education. Fitzpatrick's goal is to discuss both Derry and St. Columb's as microcosms of the North, and he properly devotes much attention to the divisions inherent amongst the students and in Northern Irish society—divisions which are often overlooked in favor of the region's religious and political divides. In one way or another, nearly all of the men Fitzpatrick interviews confess to having felt like outsiders at St. Columb's. The book points up the multiple oppositions that underlay the school's social structure in the late 1940s and 50s: boarders versus day-boys, country versus city boys, GAA members versus footballers among them. Moreover, the teachers of St. Columb's, who had previously been accustomed to educating boys from the wealthier classes, frequently expressed their distaste for the new population of scholarship students that their school had been required to admit. Eamonn McCann, in his interview, suggests: “The collision or abrasion between the way St. Columb's had seen itself on the one hand and, on the other, the expectations

and attitudes of people who came from places like the Bogside and rural areas as well created sparks, and some of the sparks caught fire” (111). A more generous view of the school's contrasting cultures is offered by Irish Ambassador James Sharkey, who credits St. Columb's with preserving “a sense of the British imperial tradition” in education alongside “substantial engagement with the Gaelic tradition” in language and sport especially (154).

Many of the interviews highlight the culture of violence both within the school, in the form of corporal punishment inflicted by priests and lay teachers, and in Northern Irish society at large. Seamus Deane offers a characteristically incisive analysis of the power structure at work both in St. Columb's and in the world outside its walls. Deane describes some teachers as “psychotics” who exerted their authority through “all sorts of conceivable mini-tortures” (80). He muses that for the teachers, as for the Unionist government and the Royal Ulster Constabulary at the time, “the more powerless people are, and the more they imitate unjust power, then the more inclined they become to those little perversions of power which actually undermine any notion of what authority could truly be” (81). Deane, like McCann, remembers vividly “the class prejudices of the teachers,” including the priests, against the new wave of scholarship students (82).

The most valuable interviews in this book might be those from figures who are less frequently examined in studies of Irish culture, such as musician Paul Brady, who recalls, in raw detail, being subjected to an intense level of bullying in his first several years as a boarder at St. Columb's. Brady, like Sharkey, is grateful to the school for introducing him to indigenous Irish culture in the form of Gaelic sports and the Irish

language—two elements which were missing from his primary school education in Strabane, even though his father taught Irish in a school just across the border in the Republic.

Fitzpatrick also includes the transcript of a conversation between Seamus Heaney and Seamus Deane which offers fresh insight into their shared history. Deane and Heaney speak at length about the founding of Field Day and discuss its relation to the early days of their friendship at St. Columb's. This material will be especially useful to researchers studying the genesis of the Northern Irish cultural renaissance which took place during the Troubles.

Director Tom Collins made the companion film to this volume, with Fitzpatrick as co-writer and co-producer. It aired on RTE and BBC, and is now available on DVD. The film is narrated by Stephen Rea, and it is beautifully produced, lending visual weight to the book's description of the changes that occurred in Derry and in Northern Ireland between 1947 and the late 1960s, with well-placed footage of the October 1968 civil rights march and subsequent police brutality of the era. Highlights include John Hume's recitation of Heaney's poem “Midterm Break,” a shot of Heaney and Deane walking past the “Free Derry” commemoration wall at the edge of the Bogside, and Phil Coulter and Paul Brady reminiscing about playing pop tunes on their school's chapel organ, unbeknownst to the priests at St. Columb's. For these and many other new perspectives on men who have shaped contemporary Irish society, *The Boys of St. Columb's* will serve as a valuable resource and teaching tool.

—Framingham State University