

Robert Burns and Ireland: New Readings on Old Relationships.

February 6-7 2009, University of Ulster Belfast Campus.

In the year that commemorates the two hundredth and fiftieth anniversary of Robert Burns' birth this symposium will examine the special literary relationship between Scotland and Ireland that is symbolised by Robert Burns. The first pirated version of Robert Burns' Edinburgh edition of poems appeared in Belfast in 1787 and has been seen as the event that inspired many Ulster poets to publish their own verse. They saw Burns as a member of a similar linguistic and cultural community and sought to engage with him not as weak imitators, but as fellow poets in an emerging Irish literary marketplace. Burns' popularity did not create an Ulster-Scots literary identity but merely sparked into creativity a tradition that had been in existence for nearly a century and continued long after his death. Indeed, this conference will examine the extent to which the fascination with Burns has occluded other literary connections between Scotland and Ireland. It will invite papers that explore the broader cultural and literary interaction between Ireland and Scotland in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Moreover, the pattern of relationship that has emerged has often been one of Scottish literary traditions being transmitted into Ireland. This conference will ask if influence was merely in one direction and examine the impact that Irish writing had upon Scotland. Thus we would wish to explore the influence of other Scottish poets and songwriters upon Ulster in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and the influence that Irish writers and writing had upon Scotland in the same period. At a time when established Irish Scottish literary relationships are being explored it is appropriate that we commemorate the profound influence of Burns in Ireland while distinguishing the new readings, developments and undiscovered connections that can be made between the two countries.

For further details contact f.ferguson@ulster.ac.uk

Provisional Programme for Burns and Ireland: New Readings on Old Relationships.

University of Ulster, Belfast Campus
Room 82A02

Friday 6th February

10.30. Welcome

11.00-12.30. Panel 1.

Frank Ferguson: The Protean Burns: Conceptualisations of Burns in 19th century Belfast.

John Erskine (Stranmillis). Burns and Ulster: Readings and Meetings.

12.30-1.30. Lunch

1.30-3.00 Panel 2.

Richard Holmes Allan Ramsay, James Arbuckle and Augustan influence in early eighteenth century Scottish poetry

Barbara Fennell, (Aberdeen) 'Language Standards and Standard Language in 18th Century Irish and Scottish English'

Stephan Dornan (Aberdeen) 'Native Tongues and Intolerable Jargons: Representing Dialect in Early Nineteenth Century Ulster Fiction'

3.-3.30 Tea/Coffee

3.30-5.00. Panel 3.

Kyle Hughes (University of Ulster) Scottish Associations and Belfast.

Jennifer Orr (Glasgow) Title, tbc

Ian Adamson "Burns and Sweet Afton": Edward Sloan the bard of Conlig.

6.30. Exhibition of Andrew Gibson's Robert Burns Materials Queen's University Special Collections

Conference Dinner

Saturday 7th February

9.30-10.45 Panel 4.

Prof Norman Vance Title tbc

Colin Walker James Bridie's *Storm in a Teacup* and *The Black Eye* in wartime Belfast.

10.45-11.00 Tea/Coffee

11-12.30 Panel 5.

Carol Baraniuk The Reception of Burns in Ulster

Philip Robinson. Contemporary Ulster-Scots Writers and Burns.

Chris Spurr (BBC) Broadcasting Burns and Ulster Scots

12.30-1.00 Conclusions.